

2 United Nations in Kuwait launches Young Ambassadors initiative**5** Protests across China as anger mounts over zero-COVID policy**8** In drought-hit Iraq, a dam threatens to swallow farms**16** Costa Rica beat Japan to hand Germany World Cup lifeline

Lawmakers insist they will reject all forms of taxation

Govt plans major reforms, taxes, amendment of population structure

Morocco savor shock win over Belgium



DOHA: Morocco's midfielder Selim Amallah fights for the ball with Belgium's defender Timothy Castagne and midfielders Axel Witsel and Thorgan Hazard during their Qatar 2022 World Cup match at Al-Thumama Stadium on Nov 27, 2022. (Inset) Morocco's defender Achraf Hakimi is kissed by his mother at the end of the match. — AFP (See Page 16)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MPs said on Sunday they will strongly oppose any government plans to impose any form of taxation and raising charges for public services, adding they will take action against such plans. Meanwhile, the Cabinet is due to approve its four-year program of action on Monday, which envisages major political and economic reforms and calls for imposing taxes and reducing the number of expats living in the country.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said that as "we opposed plans for taxation in the past, it will be our position always", pledging he will resort to questioning the government if it sought to speed up the process of passing legislation for taxation. MP Obaid Al-Wasmi said there will be no taxes imposed before the government manages to retrieve all public funds stolen by officials, estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

Government ministers informed a National Assembly panel last week that the government's four-year program of action will be debated and approved during the Cabinet's weekly meeting on Monday, and then will be sent to the National Assembly for debate. The government's program, which runs until 2026, pledges to cooperate with the Assembly to issue dozens of legislation to introduce major political, economic, social and demographic reforms that call for imposing taxes, amending the

population structure, changing the electoral constituencies and many others.

Under the program, the government pledges to resolve the decades-old problem of building houses for citizens, saying it will carry out projects to resolve 75 percent of the problem by the last year of the program. As part of political reforms, the program pledges to set up an independent body to oversee elections, amending the electoral constituencies and the election system and revising laws governing public freedoms.

The program also pledges to retrieve all public funds stolen by former officials using administrative and judicial means, in addition to issuing legislation to embolden national efforts to fight corruption. Regarding the oil sector, the program plans to develop the Supreme Petroleum Council and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and establish government companies to boost refining of crude oil.

The program calls to revise charges on public services and impose taxes on profits of Kuwaiti and foreign companies operating in the country. The program pledges to "amend the distortion in the demographic structure", regulating the residency affairs of foreigners and introducing a smart system for the recruitment of foreign workers. The program also pledges to fundamentally resolve the problem of over 100,000 stateless people, locally known as bedoons.

News in brief

New features for Mobile ID app

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information launched new features for the Kuwait Mobile ID app, which serves more than three million users. The new update includes faster login via NFC technology by reading the ID's chip; displaying the ID picture with the ability to share it; first-time registration without the need of the serial number (which will benefit more than 400,000 residents annually); finding the locations of self-service machines and a new update on the identification process when using the app.

US to give \$845m aid to Jordan

AMMAN: The United States will provide Jordan with more than \$845 million in annual financial support, officials in Amman said Sunday, as the country remains heavily dependent on foreign aid. Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh was present at the signing ceremony of the "agreement with the United States for the allocation of annual financial support of \$845.1 million", a Jordanian government statement said. In September, the US committed to providing Jordan with \$10.15 billion in aid between 2023 and 2029. — AFP

Moi to launch instant passport machines

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: A source from the interior ministry confirmed to Kuwait Times that the ministry is working on a plan to provide a service for citizens to renew and receive their passports immediately at the airport through passport machines. He said this service will be available only for those who weren't aware their passports have expired or those whose passport pages are filled with stamps. This service

will only be for holders of boarding passes present at the airport before the flight, to ensure their travel is not disrupted.

The source said the ministry will soon provide passport renewal services through passport machines installed at malls, airport and various locations around the country, explaining that 12 passport machines have been allocated through national identity centers in the governorates and the General Directorate of Nationality and Travel Documents in Dajeej. The source said citizens can apply to renew their passports through the interior ministry website, a process that takes only a few minutes, and will be able to collect their renewed passports through these machines all over the country.

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Qatar's migrant workers enjoying World Cup games

DOHA: Shafeeq Saqafi proudly wore an Argentina shirt when he sat with 15,000 other migrant workers in a hidden corner of Doha to watch Lionel Messi's side salvage their World Cup. Messi's goal in the 2-0 win over Mexico late Saturday brought the biggest crowd seen at the Asian Town stadium to their feet and Saqafi beat his chest in delight. "The shirt was something I really wanted," said the 32-year-old hotel worker from Bangladesh.

Saqafi is one of the 2.5 million foreign workers who have been the foundation of Qatar's economic miracle - helping pump oil and gas, building its World Cup stadiums and infrastructure and staffing the dozens of new hotels that have opened in the past five years. The stadium, in the Asian Town shopping complex on the outskirts of Doha, has



DOHA: Qatar's migrant workers watch the Argentina vs Mexico match on Nov 26, 2022 at a stadium in the Asian Town shopping complex. — AFP

become a daily draw for thousands of workers who live in nearby dormitories away from Doha's glitzy shopping malls and restaurants.

An Indian woman DJ revs up the overwhelmingly male and South Asian crowd before each match with Hindi pop songs and Bollywood videos. Many, like Saqafi, wear Argentina shirts.

Continued on Page 6



The new passport machines that will be launched soon.

25.5% of Kuwait population has type 2 diabetes

KUWAIT: Diabetes rates in Kuwait have reached 25.5 percent among adults, according to a recent report of the International Diabetes Federation, the Head of the Kuwaiti Diabetes Association (KDA) Dr Waleed Al-Dhahi warned on Sunday. In a press statement on the sidelines of the annual celebration of the discovery of insulin held at Mall 360, Dr Dhahi said that this is the highest prevalence of the disease among Gulf countries.

He said many factors have caused the high rates of type 2 diabetes: most popular are genetics and lifestyle. Patients can avoid type 2 diabetes by adopting a low-sugar diet and exercising regularly. As for children, Dr Dhahi noted that the modern lifestyle with technology and spending hours on

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Local

United Nations in Kuwait launches Young Ambassadors initiative

Call for tolerance, equality and respect for diversity



KUWAIT: UN Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator Conference on Sustainable Development in Kuwait Tarek El-Sheikh, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani and other officials and students attend the launch of the Young Ambassadors initiative.

KUWAIT: To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, United Nations in Kuwait launched on Sunday the Young Ambassadors initiative under the auspices of Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Tarek El-Sheikh, UN Secretary General Representative and Resident Coordinator Conference on Sustainable Development in Kuwait, said: "The Young Ambassadors initiative is to shed light on the principles called for by the Charter of the United Nations and to follow them in our work and daily technical, developmental and humanitarian cooperation with local partners."

He added: "Tolerance, equality, respect for diversity - we cannot achieve this without remembering and working to spread a culture of tolerance and equality between boys and girls in rights and duties, and respect for diversity between religions, races, cultures and societal structure among children, whether at home, at school or in the community setting, as well as in the workplace."

Sheikh affirmed that the young ambassadors will have the opportunity to learn how to apply these important principles of the UN Charter and the International Covenant



on Human Rights in practice in the work environment and in our cooperation programs with governmental and community institutions and entities. "Our current world needs tolerance more than ever before. It needs sympathy, affection and mercy, and for boys and girls to be cooperative, united and equal in developing their countries and spreading the culture of human rights to be truly ambassadors of sustainable development," he noted.

Meanwhile, Britain's Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis stated: "The perceptions that people form at a young age about women and girls can be relevant to

gender-based violence. If women and girls are seen as being weaker, less capable, not as brave, lacking in leadership abilities, then they can be regarded as having less to contribute to society. They risk being seen as less important, less worthy and of less value than others."

She indicated that people should recognize that they are all equal and we all have a contribution to make, regardless of gender, age, nationality, wealth, hoping that this Young Ambassadors Initiative will help encourage her, her team and young people to be more open minded and welcome challenges and new ideas.



Ambassador of Canada to Kuwait Aliya Mawani indicated that this program is about supporting all young ambassadors to become the most effective advocates they can be for a just and equitable world: "one in which each of us has an equal opportunity to fulfill and contribute our full potential". "When everyone in society participates equally, communities are more prosperous and more secure. Basically, everyone benefits. Many women and girls are often held back from full participation in society, be it due to history, culture, stereotypes, or the belief that we are somehow of less value than men and thus have less to offer," she said.

Mawani pointed out that diplomacy can be a powerful tool for making change, noting that the young ambassadors will get insights into "real world" diplomacy by embassies and international institutions, adding: "We face complex challenges, and we need your voices, your ideas and your action. Experience is extremely important, often the older and more experienced we get, the more challenges we see and we can lose some of the bravery and creativity that it takes to make change and to do the right thing when it's difficult. That's why your role, your voices, your ideas and your questions are so important."



> Protest at the National Assembly against censorship law and book bans (2018).

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Local

Al-Roudhan to Kuwaiti students in US: 'Our nation shall rise with its determined, well-informed youth'

Zain joins opening of NUKS USA 38th annual conference in LA

KUWAIT: Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, participated in the opening ceremony of the 38th annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA). The event, which came in strategic partnership with Zain, ran from 24-27 November in Los Angeles, California under the patronage of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Zain joined the opening ceremony at Intercontinental Downtown LA, attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan, Kuwait Ambassador to the US Jassem Al-Budaiwi, Zain and NUKS USA officials, and crowds of Kuwaiti students from all over the United States. During her opening speech, Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "I'm proud to be in LA with our nation's bright young people at this outstanding gathering. You have always seen Zain present at this event for the past 20 years as one of the main supporters of this conference and its goals, and we are glad to be back again this year."

Al-Roudhan continued: "When we read into this year's conference title, Youth who shall raise the nation, we wonder: how can a nation rise through its young people? And what does Kuwait expect from its students all around the world?"

Al-Roudhan added: "We would find a great answer to these questions in the speech delivered by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, when he addressed members of the legislative and executive branches: "we are hopeful that you will empower the role of the youth and encourage their initiatives so they may play their part in building tomorrow's Kuwait with you." The nation, in both its public and private sectors, has a role to empower you, guide you, and take your hand towards your dreams, aspirations, and passions."

Al-Roudhan explained: "On the other hand, Kuwait's youth also have a vital role that is no less important than the nation's. You must display



Al-Roudhan addressing the students.

responsible awareness of the challenges sweeping our nation, the region, and the entire world. Perhaps one of the most crucial of those challenges in today's digital world is the blazing fast spread of information in the media, especially on social media platforms. Our young people must have the ability to identify disinformation and misinformation and have the maturity to differentiate between them."

Al-Roudhan went on to say: "How can the nation rise unless its youth mature enough to be able to understand and distinguish between truth and falsehoods. Misinformation and rumors on social media can destroy the fabric of society and create hatred between its members. Disinformation, which can be even more dangerous, are lies presented as facts, driven by malicious motives with the intention of misleading the public." Al-Roudhan advised the students: "I am immensely hopeful that you will be the



Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan and Kuwait Ambassador to the US Jassem Al-Budaiwi with Zain and NUKS officials.

best ambassadors to your nation. My advice to you is to inform yourselves with the huge opportunities - and challenges - of digital transformation, and never allow anyone to mislead you or direct your thoughts. Always keep a keen eye for finding the truth out of falsehoods."

Al-Roudhan concluded: "Today, Kuwait needs you to be mindful of the challenges around us and be able to distinguish rumor from truth. I'm hopeful that you will represent our nation's values to the world and be the best reflection of its rich culture of hope, liberty, humanity, and giving."

Zain is proud to continue its strategic partnership with NUKS USA, as it is considered a main supporter of the union for nearly 20 years. NUKS USA is considered the largest gathering of Kuwaiti students abroad, and Zain's support comes in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility

strategy towards the youth and education sectors. The company is proud to have become an integral part of the union's success, through which it connects with the country's youth abroad.

The National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States of America (NUKS USA) serves nearly 14,000 Kuwaiti students studying in the United States. The union aims, through its events and programs, to connect Kuwaiti students with each other on one level, and with their nation and the latest updates of the Kuwaiti community on another. NUKS USA was publicized in the USA and was granted the recognition of the United States government. The achievement is considered a proud milestone for Kuwait's youth and is a direct result of the great relations between the State of Kuwait and United States. Such a recognition is a clear reflection of the strategic relations between the two nations.



Municipality union meets CSC, ends sit-in

KUWAIT: The Municipality union announced ending a sit-in by employees after meeting with the head of the Civil Service Commission, who promised them to resolve their demands. The Kuwait Municipality Workers Union had begun a sit-in on Sunday to protest what it described as the suffering of the workers of engineering jobs at the Municipality as a result of the CSC's neglect and procrastination in approving due allowances.

A number of protestors insisted that the sit-in is a protest against the neglect of workers' rights, and that other steps might follow. Consultant to the Kuwait Trade Union Federation and former head of the Municipality union Muhammad Al-



Arada said: "The sit-in came after nearly four years of fair demands, which the CSC has been ignoring. The next steps might even reach a complete strike if the rights of municipal employees are not met."

He pointed out that the number of participants in the sit-in ranged between 100-150 engineers



and occupants of engineering jobs among Kuwait Municipality employees. However, he indicated there was a good gesture, as the head of the CSC requested a meeting with the head of the union to discuss the fair demands of the union, "which is a praiseworthy step, as dialogue is always the best way to solve any problem".

11 abandoned cars, boat impounded in Mubarak Al-Kabeer

KUWAIT: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality branch organized field campaigns in all areas of the governorate from Nov 22 to Nov 25. Eleven abandoned cars and a boat were impounded and sent to a holding area. Head of the general hygiene and roadworks department at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality branch Fahad Al-Qurayfa said: "The aim of the field campaigns is to tackle violations and take legal action against them. The supervising team at the department takes great importance in raising the level of hygiene in areas under their responsibility. Furthermore, all things that are considered hindering of the overall view will be removed and all roads will be operated in all areas." He insisted that the supervising team will not be slack in taking all necessary legal procedures against violators of regulations related to public hygiene and roadworks.



MoH contracts more expat medical staff

KUWAIT: Sources at the health ministry revealed to Kuwait Times that a batch of doctors has been con-

tracted to work in new medical centers and hospitals that have recently opened or are to open soon. "The number of these doctors exceeds 200 Jordanians and Palestinians, who will arrive in Kuwait at the beginning of next year after completing the procedures for their appointment at the health ministry and procedures related to residency affairs," sources explained.

"This batch of doctors will be followed by another batch of nurses and technicians to work in

supportive medical specialties," the sources said, adding the contracts were made through a specialized medical team. They indicated the appointees will be subject to professional examinations when they come to Kuwait, in implementation of the regulations of the Public Authority of Manpower, which calls for professional testing of every expatriate worker who comes to Kuwait.

"The health ministry is also in the process of

finalizing contracts with other batches of doctors from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh to complement other contracts with doctors from these countries who arrived in Kuwait and officially started work," the sources said, explaining these batches will arrive in Kuwait successively starting from the first quarter of 2023, adding new nursing staff will also arrive in Kuwait from India and the Philippines.

Municipality plan covers 3 areas for 6m people by 2040

KUWAIT: The head of the structural plan committee of the Municipal Council Sharifa Al-Shalfan said on Sunday the fourth structural plan consists of three urban areas covering a total of around 6 million people by 2040. "The urban area will include the financial and commercial center of the country, in addition to the retail sector and tourist areas," Shalfan said.

"The country's fourth structural plan will soon see the light to contribute to the implementation of Kuwait's development plan and its aspirations to promote sustainable development programs, raise the quality of life of residents, support the private sector and improve Kuwait's regional and global position," she said.

"The executive body of the Municipality presented for the first time to the Municipal Council a general summary of the fourth structural plan of the country for 2040 so that members can make their observations and opinions on what it includes in preparation for its issuance by decree. The council only viewed a general summary of this plan and not the overall plan including details, maps, charts, data and information, which will be studied in a comprehensive manner and make final notes will be made," Shalfan explained.

"Due to the importance of the state's general structural plan and its connection to the implementation of the state's future plans, and because future decisions will be based on it, a temporary committee has been established at the current Municipal Council to study it and make observations on it. The committee is made up of seven members from the Municipal Council and includes a number of experienced academics, engineers and architects from the private and public sectors," she said.

"The importance of the plan in setting a vision for future population densities, projections for the number of workers and the relationship between workplaces, housing and means of transportation is to link them. Moreover, the importance comes from developing new concepts and planning methods, including building systems and planning regulations, to introduce modern urban planning concepts, including mixed land uses, improving the level of public spaces in the city and providing an environment suitable for pedestrians," Shalfan added.

"The fourth masterplan includes recommendations and policies for implementation within timeframes for the implementation of related projects, which are supported by geographic information systems," she said, adding the council's priority is to support urban development in the country.

News in brief

Central bank asks banks to
issue salaries to bedoons

KUWAIT: Central Bank of Kuwait has announced in a circular to banks to continue to credit salaries of stateless residents who have a card from the central authority or those whose IDs expired less than three months ago. "Banks can continue crediting salaries for a period of three months maximum until renewal procedures are completed, as the authority is still continuing to issue new cards to all servicemen of the defense ministry," the Central Bank announced in its circular.

MoH undersecretary to evaluate
heads of medical authorities

KUWAIT: The health ministry has referred the heads of medical departments in hospitals and specialized centers for evaluation by the ministry's undersecretary. "This comes within the framework of evaluating the efficiency of the performance of employees in the ministry for the year 2022 and based on directives by the Civil Service Commission and the importance of evaluating efficiency," an administrative circular issued by Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha said. "The heads of medical and support departments in hospitals and specialized centers are subject to evaluation by the heads of medical authorities, and in the case of unavailability of a head of an authority, the heads of departments will be evaluated based on regulations and procedures of the ministry," the circular explained.

Aircraft fuel exported
from Zour Refinery

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) celebrated the export of the first shipment of aircraft fuel from Al-Zour Refinery on Sunday. The shipment is being loaded onto the Pacific



KUWAIT: Based on its social responsibility towards consolidating and strengthening voluntary environmental work and disseminating true environmental knowledge among groups of the society, the Friends of the Environment team at the Kuwaiti Environmental Protection Society participated in the celebration of World Children's Day organized by Yarmouk Health City that included many activities in the health and environmental fields as well as the psychological and social fields.

"The youth fall within the interests of the society through specialized projects of the environment team program, which includes youths aged 8 to 18. Therefore, the society decided to participate in the celebration with many activities of interest to this age group," Public Relations Officer at KEPS Maali Al-Uqab said.

"The schedule, which was administratively supervised and organized by Anwar Al-Muhareb, a member of the association, also included environmental artwork for children aged 4 years and older, distributing environmentally friendly garbage bags and urging them to clean up the site, organizing a workshop for planting seeds in plastic bottles using cotton and water, making a piece of art from furniture cartons and decorating it with simple materials from nature, and organizing a composting workshop to recycle leftover food, leaves and soil so that it can become arable soil," Uqab said, praising Yarmouk Health City.

"The team is composed of Kuwaiti youth under the age of 18, and the association is keen to com-



prehensively qualify them through their participation in environmental conferences and exhibitions locally and internationally. The association instills in them the value of environmental citizenship and prepares them to engage in voluntary environmental work," she added.

"The association works to enhance the value of environmental citizenship among team members through the behavior that the individual adopts to

protect the environment and its natural resources and preserve them from pollution, which raises awareness of the scarcity of natural resources and their limited ability for renewing them," Uqab said. "Moreover, the importance of raising awareness of environmental issues is high, as the individual's role in society reflects on a large scale the principles of preserving nonrenewable sources that are vital to sustainable development," she concluded.

IWG members visit
Kuwait Airways

KUWAIT: A delegation from the International Women's Group (IWG), headed by Ghada Shawky, President of IWG and the wife of the Ambassador of Egypt, paid a field visit to Kuwait Airways on Nov 20, 2022. Members were received by the staff of the department of institutional communication and public relations. An organized tour was arranged of the engineering department, where the IWG members were received by Abdullah Al-Habib.

An overview of the history of Kuwait Airways from its inception in 1954 to the present day was presented, part of which mentioned the continuous and effective role of the engineering department since the arrival of aircraft from the factory until

entering service and providing continuous maintenance. Habib also explained the periodical maintenance by the engineering department of the entire fleet, which currently includes 33 aircraft, and its concern for the general safety of its customers.

A detailed explanation was also given about the types of aircrafts used by Kuwait Airways since 1954 until now, mentioning modern aircraft, their types and advantages. The delegation visited the A320neo, A330neo and Boeing B777 aircraft. During a tour of the aircraft, the members were then briefed about the aircrafts' seats and services provided on board. At the end of the tour, Habib answered all inquiries and questions by the members of the International Women's Group. Shawky then presented on behalf of the group an honorary shield to express gratitude to Kuwait Airways and presented certificates of appreciation to Habib and the staff of the Department of institutional communication and public relations.



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Obiang wins 6th term as E Guinea president

North Korea to have 'world's most powerful' nuclear force

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METTUR: Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party carders and relatives prepare to perform the last rites of Thangavel who self-immolated to protest against Hindi language imposition at Thalzhaiyur village at Mettur in India's Tamil Nadu state. —AFP

Indian man burns himself to death in 'language protest'

New Delhi attempting to impose nationwide usage of Hindi

NEW DELHI: An octogenarian man burned himself to death in southern India in protest at what he called New Delhi's attempts to impose nationwide usage of Hindi, a language mostly spoken in the north, police said Sunday. Language is an emotive issue in India where hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken, but English serves as the main official medium while state governments use regional languages. According to the most recent census in 2011, fewer than half of Indian citizens speak Hindi - just under 44 percent.

But last month a group of parliamentarians headed by the powerful interior minister Amit Shah reportedly recommended making Hindi the national official language, including for technical education such as medicine and engineering. Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken of a

"slave mentality" around the use of English, and promoted the use of Indian languages. But opponents accuse his government of attempting to impose Hindi, causing particular anger in the south.

Most southern Indian languages are Dravidian, a completely different language family to the Indo-European group which includes Hindi. MV Thangavel, 85, a farmer in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, doused himself in petrol and kerosene and set himself alight, police said. He was holding a Tamil-language placard reading: "Modi government stop imposing Hindi. Why do we need to choose Hindi over our literature-rich Tamil... it will affect future of our youth."

Senthil, a police officer who uses only one name, told AFP that Thangavel had killed himself. "He wrote the banner against central government," he

added. Thangavel carried out his protest on Saturday outside an office in Salem of Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK party, of which he was a member. Party leader MK Stalin - who has criticized the Modi government's language policies - offered condolences to Thangavel's family but urged others to avoid such extreme protests.

"We must not lose another life," reports quoted him as saying, condemning the central government's "domineering attitude". "Let's continue to fight against the imposition of Hindi politically, democratically," he said. "Don't let narrow-mindedness spoil a beautiful country of diversity." The subject is a long-running political issue - the then ruling Congress party sought to make Hindi the official national language in the 1960s, causing enduring resentment in southern India. — AFP

Italian rescuers hunt for missing people

CASAMICCIOLA TERME: Italian rescuers were searching for a dozen missing people on the southern island of Ischia on Sunday after a landslide killed at least one person, as the government scheduled an emergency meeting. A wave of mud and debris swept through the small town of Casamicciola Terme early Saturday morning, engulfing at least one house and sweeping cars down to the sea, local media and emergency services said. Rescuers had recovered the body of a 31-year-old woman, according to Italian news agency AGI, with other local media reporting that 13 people had been injured in the incident. About a dozen people were still unaccounted for by early Saturday evening, according to Claudio Palomba, prefect of Naples, of which the island is part.

But some people who had earlier been reported missing had since been found safe, including one family with a newborn baby, he said. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni tweeted her sympathy to those affected, saying she had called an extraordinary cabinet meeting on Sunday to discuss the disaster. "We are afraid that there might be other victims, but so far the current figure is one dead," Luca Cari, a spokesman for the fire service, told AFP.

The rescue effort was hampered by rain and high winds, which also delayed ferries bringing reinforcements from the mainland. Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi had earlier warned there were people trapped in the mud, saying it was a "very serious" situation. However, he denied a statement by his colleague Matteo Salvini, the deputy prime minister and infrastructure minister, that eight people had died, saying this had not been confirmed.

Complex rescue operation

Heavy rain sent torrents of mud through the streets of Casamicciola Terme, a settlement on the north of Ischia, a lush island near Capri that is thronged with tourists in summer. Trees were uprooted and cars left battered on the side of the road or in the water, according to AFP journalists. The fire service said earlier one house had been overwhelmed by the mud and two people had been rescued from a car that had been swept into the sea. In the worst-affected area of the town, at least 30 families were trapped in their homes without water or electricity, with mud and debris blocking the road, ANSA news agency reported.

Officials said they expected to evacuate and find temporary homes for between 150 and 200 people by Saturday evening. "The rescue effort remains complex due to the weather conditions," said the department for civil protection, but it stressed teams would keep working through the night. —AFP

China's zero-COVID policy sparks anger

BEIJING: Hundreds of people took to the streets in Beijing and Shanghai on Sunday to protest against China's zero-COVID policy in a rare outpouring of public anger against the state. China's hardline virus strategy is stoking public frustration, with many growing weary of snap lockdowns, lengthy quarantines and mass testing campaigns.

A deadly fire on Thursday in Urumqi, the capital of northwest China's Xinjiang region, has become a fresh catalyst for public anger, with many blaming lengthy COVID lockdowns for hampering rescue efforts. Authorities deny the claims. Hundreds rallied at Beijing's elite Tsinghua University to protest against lockdowns on Sunday, one witness who wished to remain anonymous told AFP. "At 11:30 am students started holding up signs at the entrance of the canteen, then more and more people joined. Now there are 200 to 300 people," they said.

Participants sang the national anthem and "the Internationale" - a standard of the international communist movement - and chanted "freedom will prevail" and "no to lockdowns, we want freedom", they said. They described students holding up blank pieces of paper, a symbolic protest against censorship. And in Shanghai on Sunday afternoon, hundreds of people gathered in the megacity's downtown to hold what appeared to be a silent protest, an eyewitness told AFP, near where a demonstration had erupted just hours earlier.

Demonstrators holding blank pieces of paper and white flowers stood silently at several intersections, the person said under condition of anonymity, before police officers eventually moved to clear the blocked roads. Crowds had gathered hours before on nearby Wulumuqi street - named for Urumqi in Mandarin - with video showing protesters chanting "Xi Jinping, step down! CCP, step down!" in a rare display of public opposition to the Chinese Communist Party's top leadership. The video was widely shared on social media and geolocated by AFP.

A person who attended the Shanghai protests but who asked not to be identified told AFP the first rally was in full swing at 2:00 am (1800 GMT), with one group mourning the 10 people killed in the Urumqi fire while another group chanted slogans. Video taken by an eyewitness showed a large crowd shouting and holding up blank pieces of



BEIJING: People queue up to be tested for COVID-19 coronavirus at a swab collection site in Beijing on November 27, 2022. —AFP

paper as they faced several lines of police.

The attendee said there were minor clashes but that overall the police were "civilized". "It's shocking to know that, under today's circumstances, there are still many brave people standing out," they said. Multiple witnesses said several people were taken away by the police. Authorities were swift to curb online discussion of the protest, with related phrases scrubbed from the Twitter-like Weibo platform almost immediately after footage of the rallies emerged.

University vigils

Other vigils took place overnight at universities across China, including one at Tsinghua's neighbor Peking University, an undergraduate participant told AFP. Speaking anonymously for fear of repercussions, he said some anti-Covid slogans had been graffitied on a wall in the university. Some of the words echoed a banner that was hung over a Beijing bridge just before the Communist Party Congress in October. People had started gathering from around midnight local time, but he hadn't dared join initially. "When I arrived ... I think there were at least 100 people there, maybe 200," the undergraduate said. "I heard people yelling: 'No to COVID tests, yes to freedom!'," he said.

Photos and videos he showed AFP corroborated

his account. Videos on social media also showed a mass vigil at Nanjing Institute of Communications, with people holding lights and white sheets of paper. Hashtags relating to the protest were censored on Weibo, and video platforms Duoyin and Kuaihou were scrubbed of footage. Videos from Xi'an, Guangzhou and Wuhan showing similar small protests also spread on social media. AFP was unable to verify the footage independently.

'Lift lockdowns!'

China reported 39,506 domestic COVID-19 cases Sunday, a record high but small compared to caseloads in the West at the height of the pandemic. The protests come against a backdrop of mounting public frustration over China's zero-tolerance approach to the virus and follow sporadic rallies in other cities. A number of high-profile cases in which emergency services have been allegedly slowed down by COVID lockdowns, leading to deaths, have catalysed public opposition. Hundreds of people massed outside Urumqi's government offices after the deadly fire, chanting: "Lift lockdowns!", footage partially verified by AFP shows. AFP verified the video by geolocating local landmarks but was unable to specify exactly when the protests occurred. —AFP

International

Obiang wins sixth term as Equatorial Guinea leader

The longest-ruling head of state - excluding monarchs

MALABO: Equatorial Guinea's ruler Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been re-elected to a sixth term as president with 94.9 percent of the votes cast, election officials announced on Saturday, putting turnout for the vote at 98 percent. Obiang, 80, who seized power in a 1979 coup, is the longest-ruling head of state in the world excluding monarchs. He has never officially been re-elected with less than 93 percent of the vote. Electoral commission head Faustino Ndong Esono Eyang confirmed that Obiang would serve another seven years in the top job. The commission said the turnout rate for the election was 98 percent.

The landslide result was widely expected in the oil-rich and authoritarian Central African nation, where the political opposition is extremely weak. Obiang had the backing of a coalition of 15 parties, including his all-powerful ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE). The PDGE, which was the country's only legal political movement until 1991, also swept all seats in the National Assembly and the Senate.

The percentages won by the opposition candidates, Andres Esono Ondo of the Convergence for Social Democracy and Buena Ventura Monsuy Asumu of the Social Democratic Coalition Party, were not announced, with both garnering just a few thousand votes. "The definitive results of the vote find in our favour once more," Obiang's son, Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, wrote on Twitter.

"We will continue to prove that we are a great

political party."

'History repeating itself'

Obiang has ruled Equatorial Guinea for more than 43 years after ousting his uncle, Francisco Macias Nguema, who was then executed by a firing squad. He has suppressed dissent and seen off a string of attempted coups in the Spanish-speaking nation. Security forces arrested opposition figures in the weeks before the result, with the regime saying it was thwarting a "conspiracy" to commit attacks in the capital Malabo and economic hub Bata. The authorities also closed the country's land borders with neighboring Gabon and Cameroon before campaigning began, saying it was foiling infiltrators from disrupting the vote.

Obiang is just the second president in Equatorial Guinea's history since it gained independence in 1968 from Spain, its colonial power for nearly two centuries. "Equatorial Guinea's history has been repeating itself for 43 years and the political vision established by the government will continue after this election," Justo Bolekia, a professor at Spain's University of Salamanca, told AFP. "It was predictable, including for the opposition. We were even expecting a score closer to 98 percent," he added.

The discovery of offshore oil in the mid-1990s turned Equatorial Guinea into sub-Saharan Africa's third-richest country in terms of per-capita income in 2021. But the wealth has remained concentrated in the hands of a few families. In 2006, when the oil boom was in full swing, more than three quarters of



MALABO: Equatorial Guinea's President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo prepares to speak after casting his ballot at the polling station of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Malabo during Equatorial Guinea's presidential, legislative and municipal elections. —AFP

the population lived in extreme poverty, or on less than \$1.90 a day, according to the World Bank. There have been no new figures since. The country also has a reputation for graft, ranking 172 out of 180 nations on Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index. — AFP



MEXICO CITY: Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (center) attends a military parade commemorating the 112th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution at the Zocalo square in Mexico City. —AFP

speech outlining his achievements in office. Mexican presidents are barred from serving more than one term, and Lopez Obrador has ruled out trying to change the constitution to stay in office.

Even so, he is keen to see his Morena party hold onto power after he stands aside. Two of Lopez Obrador's close allies and potential successors, Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum and Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, are expected to march alongside him. Lopez Obrador knows "that in order for him to win elections he needs oiled machinery that works all the time," said Gustavo Lopez, a political scientist at Tecnologico de Monterrey, a Mexican university.

Opposition parties accuse Lopez Obrador of being an "authoritarian" populist who is "militariz-

ing" the country by giving a greater role to the armed forces in both security and infrastructure projects. His efforts to revamp the independent National Electoral Institute (INE) have proven particularly controversial. Lopez Obrador alleges that the INE endorsed fraud when he ran unsuccessfully for the presidency in 2006 and 2012, before winning in 2018.

He wants the organization to be replaced by a new body with members chosen by voters instead of lawmakers and with a smaller budget. Critics see the plan as an attack on one of Mexico's most important democratic institutions. The reform would require support from at least two-thirds of lawmakers in Congress, and Lopez Obrador's political opponents have vowed to oppose the changes. — AFP

Greece opens abuse, and fraud probe into famed charity

ATHENS: Greece has opened a probe into one of the country's best-known child charities after numerous claims of alleged abuse and financial mismanagement, a justice ministry source told AFP on Sunday. The Ark of the World, founded by a charismatic priest, has worked with underprivileged children for at least two decades in Athens and several other parts of Greece. Since mid-November, Greek media have been broadcasting allegations of malfeasance at the charity from former staff and former children under its care, their faces obscured and voices disguised.

One 19-year-old told police that he was allegedly sexually molested by a senior charity official, according to media reports. One former staffer said that he was fired after speaking out after a co-worker allegedly beat three boys. Others have claimed that charity executives demanded monetary donations instead of clothes and food, and lived lives of luxury. The government this week replaced the organization's entire board and installed new management.

The charity had been claiming to have some 500 children in its care, but deputy social affairs minister Domna Michailidou on Sunday told To Vima daily that the actual number was 136. "(The children) are safe," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told Alpha TV on Friday, calling the case "complicated". "We are interested in seeing what happened as regards to the finances. Because these are facilities handled large sums of money, primarily from private donations," Mitsotakis said.

The non-profit had received millions of euros and dozens of properties from private donors over more than two decades, according to media. The charity's founder, Father Antonios Papanikolaou, who has worked with children from underprivileged Greek and migrant families since 1998, has dismissed the claims. "It's not possible. This cannot have happened. I never harmed a child," he was quoted as saying by Star TV Wednesday.

The head of the Orthodox Church of Greece, Archbishop Ieronymos, sought to distance the church from the priest, saying Papanikolaou was "solely responsible" for running the charity and that he "never consented" to cooperate with church welfare officials. In 2018, the Ark of the World was among 50 individuals and organizations from 26 EU countries to receive the annual European Citizen's Prize, an award for initiatives that promote integration and tolerance. The Ark had also received numerous domestic awards, including from the Athens Academy in 2008. —AFP

Mexico president to 'show muscle' at big political rally

MEXICO CITY: Supporters of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador are expected to flood the streets of Mexico City on Sunday in a major show of political strength by the left-wing populist. The rally comes as presidential hopefuls, including Lopez Obrador's allies, warm up for the race to replace him in 2024.

Two weeks after tens of thousands joined an opposition protest against his proposed electoral reform, Lopez Obrador plans to lead a pro-government march through the heart of the capital. The aim is to celebrate the government's "transformation of Mexico" four years into his six-year term, Lopez Obrador told reporters. "I invite all the people, all those who can attend," including government ministers and lawmakers, he said.

It will be the first such march led by a Mexican president in at least four decades, and possibly the biggest pro-government rally since Lopez Obrador took office in 2018, according to experts. Lopez Obrador wants to "show muscle," Fernando Dworak, a political analyst at the Mexican Autonomous Institute of Technology, said. "It was a serious mistake by the opposition to believe that the president can be beaten on the streets," he told AFP, referring to the November 13 anti-government protest.

'Oiled machinery'

Lopez Obrador enjoys an approval rating of nearly 60 percent, and few doubt his ability to draw a huge crowd on Sunday, when he plans to give a

MoI to launch instant passport...

Continued from Page 1

He said the main purpose of this service is to

25.5% of Kuwait population has...

Continued from Page 1

tablets and smartphones have contributed to the increase in the number of children suffering from diabetes.

Qatar's migrant workers enjoying...

Continued from Page 1

For most, the fan zone on the cricket pitch is the nearest they will get to the World Cup. A few thousand 40-riyal (\$10) World Cup tickets were put on sale and quickly snapped up.

Yaseen Gul, who has worked for a Doha electrical firm for a decade, said he comes to the stadium "to enjoy myself - cheaply". "My salary has improved and I will not go home," he said. Shakeel Mahmoud said he could not afford to buy match tickets and he had to leave the Argentina game before the end because he had to go work. A cup of hot milky tea at the stadium beverage stand costs \$1, but there were no queues. "There is no pressure to buy anything so I am grateful for that," said Mahmoud. — AFP



DOHA: Qatar's migrant workers watch the Argentina vs Mexico match at a stadium in the Asian Town shopping complex. — AFP

reduce traffic at national identity centers in governorates, especially during the summer period. It also aims to ease matters for citizens, so they do not have to come to the centers twice to receive their passports. This service will be available for those who are 21 years and older.

The source pointed out that after launching the electronic passport machines, the option to renew passports at the centers will continue to be available for citizens.

KDA was established under the umbrella of the Kuwaiti Medical Association and includes more than 31,000 registered members to date. It works in cooperation with the International Diabetes Federation, an organization that includes more than 230 local diabetes organizations in more than 170 countries and territories. The association raises awareness of diabetes and provides workshops for the medical and nonmedical community to share the latest developments related to diabetes. — KUNA



CIANJUR, Indonesia: Rescue workers carry a body retrieved from rubble at Cugenang village in West Java on Nov 26, 2022, following a 5.6-magnitude earthquake on November 21. — AFP

Death toll from Indonesia quake rises to 321

CIANJUR, Indonesia: The death toll from an earthquake that hit Indonesia's island of Java this week has risen to 321 as rescuers found more bodies on Sunday, the national disaster mitigation agency said. The shallow 5.6-magnitude earthquake hit the West Java town of Cianjur on Monday, where most of the victims were killed as buildings collapsed or landslides were triggered.

Disaster mitigation agency chief Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, told a news briefing Sunday that rescuers found three more bodies. Eight were found on Saturday. "With

the discovery of these three (bodies), as of today, the death toll becomes 321 people," said Suharyanto. Eleven people remain missing.

Rescuers will resume their search on Monday, focusing on areas where the missing are believed to have been buried, said West Java search and rescue agency head Jumaril, who also uses one name. The quake damaged more than 62,000 houses and forced more than 73,000 people to evacuate to at least 325 shelters, Suharyanto said.

Disaster agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said authorities were set to discuss next week whether to extend an emergency response period beyond its initial 14 days. Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide. Monday's tremor was the deadliest in the archipelago nation since a 2018 quake and resulting tsunami killed more than 4,000 people on the island of Sulawesi. — AFP

International

North Korea to have ‘world’s most powerful’ nuclear force

Kim Jong Un celebrates newest intercontinental ballistic missile

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country aimed to have the world’s most powerful nuclear force as he celebrated the launch of its newest intercontinental ballistic missile at a ceremony with his young daughter, state media reported Sunday. Kim also handed promotions to more than 100 officials and scientists for their work on the Hwasong-17 - dubbed the “monster missile” by analysts and believed to be capable of reaching the US mainland - just days after Pyongyang test-fired it in one of its most powerful launches yet.

Hailing the new ICBM as “the world’s strongest strategic weapon”, Kim said North Korean scientists had made a “wonderful leap forward in the development of the technology of mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles”, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. Building the nuclear force to protect the dignity and sovereignty of the state and the people “is the greatest and most important revolutionary cause, and its ultimate goal is to possess the world’s most powerful strategic force, the absolute force unprecedented in the century”, Kim was quoted as saying in his order promoting the officials.

The leading officials and scientists had demonstrated to the world Pyongyang’s “goal of building the world’s strongest army”, he added. The launching vehicle for the new Hwasong-17 ICBM was awarded the title of “DPRK Hero”, a separate KCNA report said, using the initials for the North’s official name. It “clearly proved before the world that the DPRK is a full-fledged nuclear power”, the report said, adding the North “fully demonstrated its might as the most powerful ICBM state”.

Hong Min of the Korea Institute for National Unification said the North’s trumpeting of the Hwasong-17’s test-firing was aimed at elevating its status as a nuclear power. “If the (launch of the) Hwasong-15 in 2017 was focused on becoming a nation that can threaten the US mainland with nukes, the latest missile is focusing on becoming the most powerful ICBM state,” he said. The UN Security Council has passed nearly a dozen resolutions imposing sanctions on



This undated picture released from North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on November 27, 2022 shows North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un (centre right) and his daughter (centre left) posing with soldiers who contributed to the test-firing of the new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), at an unknown location in North Korea. — AFP

North Korea over its nuclear and missile activity since 2006.

‘Limitless bolstering’

Attending a photo session on Saturday with officials and scientists who had contributed to the successful test-firing of the missile, Kim called for “limitless bolstering of the defence capabilities”, KCNA said in another report. Kim exhorted the scientists and workers to “expand and bolster up the nuclear war deterrent of the country at an exceptionally rapid speed”. The official Rodong Sinmun newspaper carried more than a dozen pictures of Kim at the photo session with his “beloved daughter”, who was revealed to the world for the first time at last week’s ICBM launch.

Until then, North Korean state media had not mentioned Kim’s children, and last week’s report was the

first official confirmation that he had a daughter, experts said. The photos showed the girl - believed to be Kim’s second child, named Ju Ae - dressed in a black coat with a fur collar, linking arms with her father as they posed in front of the gigantic missile surrounded by uniformed soldiers.

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said the daughter’s presence was meant to portray Hwasong-17 as “the protector of the future generation”. “It looks like he will continue to parade his daughter on various occasions and use her as a means for propaganda,” he added. The November 18 ICBM test was the latest in a record-breaking blitz of missile launches by Pyongyang, with officials and analysts in Seoul and Washington warning they could culminate in a seventh nuclear test by North Korea, which last tested an atomic device in 2017.— AFP

Turkish threats leave Syria Kurds in fear for symbolic city

KOBANE: In the Syrian Kurdish city of Kobane, gripped by fear of a Turkish offensive, Saleh Abdo Khalil passes an open-air “museum” of buildings reduced to rubble. “Daesh destroyed these buildings,” the local baker said, using an acronym for Islamic State (IS) group jihadists who previously terrorized this region. That danger has passed, but now, he says: “Turkey wants to destroy the rest of the city.”

Since Sunday, Turkey has carried out air strikes against the semi-autonomous Kurdish zones in north and northeastern Syria, and across the border in Iraq. Those raids, which started in Kobane, have killed 58 Kurdish fighters and Syrian soldiers as well as a Kurdish journalist, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Ankara has threatened a ground offensive and made clear that Kobane, also known as Ayn al-Arab, would be a primary objective.

US-supported Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), now the Kurds’ de facto army in the area, led the battle that dislodged IS fighters from the last scraps of their Syrian territory in 2019. Years before, in 2015, Kurdish forces drove the jihadists from Kobane, on the border with Turkey, and the city became a symbol of their victory against IS. To keep the memories of the combat alive, Kurdish authorities erected a cordon around a group of destroyed buildings, burnt-out vehicles and missile remnants, dubbing the area the Kobane “museum”.

‘People don’t sleep at night’

While the football World Cup in Qatar has captured some residents’ attention, tension can be read on their faces. Most fled the combat with IS before slowly returning and rebuilding. “We fought IS for the whole world, and today the world closes its eyes and acts like an ostrich while Turkey bombs,” said the baker Khalil, 42. One week after a bombing in Istanbul on November 13 that killed six people and wounded 81, Ankara said it launched air strikes from “70 planes and drones” against Kurdish bases in Iraq and Syria, starting with Kobane.

Turkey blamed the Istanbul bombing on the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) - designated a terrorist group by the European Union and the United States-and said it was ordered from Kobane. The PKK has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, and Turkey alleges that Syrian Kurdish fighters are the group’s allies. Kurdish groups denied any involvement in the Ankara blast. Turkey then hit other areas including the SDF bastion of Hasakeh province, in the northeast, and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed Tuesday that Turkey would “soon” begin a ground operation.—AFP



KOBANE: A picture shows a view of the ‘Free Woman’ square in the Kurdish majority northern Syrian city of Kobane.— AFP



TROYES: In this file photo taken on June 26, 1972, the prison vans transporting the defendants Claude Buffet and Roger Bontems leave the courthouse of Troyes under the gaze of onlookers, to bring them back to prison of Troyes during their trial. — AFP

How one beheading 50 years ago led France to end death penalty

PARIS: On a biting cold morning on November 28, 1972, a Frenchman was guillotined for a murder he did not commit, in a case that so traumatized his lawyer he would spend the rest of his life campaigning to end the death penalty. Roger Bontems, 36, was beheaded for being an accessory to the brutal murder of a nurse and a guard during a break-out attempt at a prison in eastern France. Seven minutes after he was decapitated in the courtyard of La Sante prison in Paris, his co-conspirator Claude Buffet-a 39-year-old man convicted of a double murder that had sent shockwaves through France-met a similar end.

Among the witnesses of the executions was Robert Badinter, a crusading young lawyer who was haunted by his failure to save the life of his client Bontems. In a 2002 interview, Badinter, who as justice minister famously defied a hostile French public to abolish capital punishment in 1981, revealed that for a long time after Bontems’s death, “on waking around dawn, I would obsessively mull over why we had failed”. “They had accepted that he had not killed anyone. Why then did they sentence him to death?”

Knives made from spoons

In September 1971, Buffet, a hardened criminal who is serving a life sentence for murder at Clairvaux prison, convinces fellow inmate Roger Bontems, who is serving a 20-year term for assault and aggravated theft, to join him in a high-stakes escape attempt. The pair fake illness and are taken to the infirmary where, armed with knives carved out of spoons, they take a nurse and a guard hostage. They threaten to execute their captives unless they are freed and given weapons. This precipitates a standoff with the authorities that keeps the French glued to their TV screens until police storm the prison at dawn and find both hostages dead, their throats slit.

Calls for heads to roll

The grisly murder of the nurse, a mother of two, and the prison warden, father of a one-year-old girl, sparks an impassioned debate about the death penalty, which has not been implemented since President Georges Pompidou, a pragmatic Gaullist, came to power two

years earlier. Hundreds of people baying for the mens’ heads pack the streets outside the courthouse when they go on trial in Aube in 1972. The nurse’s husband and warden’s family are among those attending. Buffet, who is portrayed in the media as a heartless monster, admits to killing the guard and stabbing the nurse, and defies the court to sentence him to death.

Bontems is found guilty of merely being an accessory. But he is also given the death penalty, amid intense pressure from prison wardens’ groups seeking revenge for their colleague’s death. Badinter appeals to the highest court in the land not to apply the law of “an eye for an eye”, and then to Pompidou, who has pardoned six other death-row prisoners. His pleas fall on deaf ears in the face of a poll showing 63 percent of the French favor capital punishment.

An activist is born

On November 28, 1971, Bontems and Buffet are beheaded in the courtyard of La Sante prison, under a giant black canopy erected to prevent the media snapping pictures from a helicopter. Badinter, whose Jewish father died in a Nazi death camp, would later say the case changed his stance on the death penalty “from an intellectual conviction to an activist passion”.

“I swore to myself on leaving the courtyard of la Sante prison that morning at dawn, that I would spend the rest of my life combating the death penalty,” Badinter told AFP in 2021. Five years later he helped convince a jury not to execute a man who kidnapped and murdered a seven-year-old boy, in a case that he turned into a trial of the death penalty itself.

Badinter allied in experts to describe in grisly detail the workings of the guillotine, which had been used to decapitate prisoners since the French Revolution of 1789. In all, he saved six men from execution, eliciting death threats in the process. “We entered the court by the front door and once the verdict had been read and the accused’s head was safe, we often had to leave by a hidden stairway,” the man dubbed “the murderers’ lawyer” by his detractors, recalled.

When he was appointed justice minister in President Francois Mitterrand’s first Socialist government in June 1981, he made ending the death penalty an immediate priority. Its abolition was finally adopted by parliament on September 30, 1981, after a landmark address by Badinter to MPs. Decrying a “killer” justice system, he said: “Tomorrow, thanks to you, there will no longer be the stealthy executions at dawn, under a black canopy, that shame us all.”— AFP

90 years on, Ukrainians see repeat of ‘genocide’

KYIV: Ninety years ago, millions perished in Ukraine in a manmade famine under Joseph Stalin that many in the country call genocide. For Ganna Pertchuk, the current Russian invasion is a case of history repeating itself. At the tall candle-shaped Holodomor (Ukrainian for death by starvation) memorial centre in central Kyiv, a dozen Orthodox priests in black and silver robes gathered Saturday for a religious ceremony for the victims of the famine. The event was held outdoors despite sub-zero temperatures. Before starting the ceremony, Archbishop Filaret, 93, laid a wreath of red carnations at the monument with a statue of an emaciated girl clutching some stalks of wheat against her chest. “We pray for those who perished in the famine,” he said. “The Holodomor was not a result of a bad harvest but the targeted extermination of the Ukrainian people,” he said. “What happened in the 1930s was genocide and what is happening now is also genocide,” said Pertchuk, a pensioner, who attended the ceremony. “The parallels are very clear.”

Ukraine is known as the breadbasket of Europe for its abundant wheat crops, a product of its rich, black soil. But under Soviet rule it lost between four and eight million citizens during the 1932-1933 famine. Some researchers put the figure even higher. While some historians argue the famine was planned and exacerbated by Stalin to quash an independence movement, others suggest it was a result of rapid Soviet industrialization and the collectivisation of agriculture. Ukraine officially considers it a “genocide” along with a number of Western countries, a label that Moscow vehemently rejects.

‘Victory of Good over Evil’

Pertchuk, like many Ukrainians has heard horror stories from family members. Her mother-in-law, remembered as a young girl hiding with her family in a village near Kyiv so “that she wasn’t eaten up,” Pertchuk said, speaking of a famine that fuelled rare cases of cannibalism. “Imagine the horror,” said the 61-year-old former nurse, with tears in her eyes.

She said she was “praying for our victory which will be a victory of Good over Evil”. “It was an artificial genocidal famine....” priest Oleksandr Shmurygin, 38, told AFP. “Now when we experience this massive unprovoked war of Russia against Ukraine, we see history repeating itself.” Among those gathered to commemorate the victims of the famine was lawyer Andriy Savchuk, who spoke of its “irreparable” loss for Ukraine.—AFP



GOMA: Kenyan soldiers sit on a vehicle in Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.— AFP

Ceasefire holding in eastern DR Congo

GOMA: The frontlines between government troops and M23 rebels remained calm in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo on Sunday for a second day running, local residents told AFP, after a ceasefire came into force. DRC President Felix Tshisekedi attended a regional mini-summit in Luanda on Wednesday, agreeing a deal on the cessation of hostilities in DRC’s war-torn east from Friday evening.

M23 rebels, who have seized swaths of territory in recent weeks, were to withdraw from “occupied zones”, failing which the East African regional force would intervene. Local people reported no sign of a rebel pullout by midday Sunday. Clashes had continued right up to the ceasefire deadline north of the provincial capital Goma, but on Sunday both sides were holding their positions, locals told AFP by telephone.

On Saturday, Mai Mai militia and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation Rwanda (FDLR) fought with M23 for control of a zone northeast of the provincial capital Goma where the national army is not present. As a result M23 took over the town of Kisharo, 30 kilometers from the Uganda border, residents said. AFP was unable to independently confirm the accounts from the locals. The March 23 group had been dormant for years, but took up arms again late last year accusing government of failing to honor a disarmament deal.—AFP

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2022

Business



SALAHEDDINE: Photo shows a road leading to the village of Messahag in northern Iraq's Salaheddine province, one of the villages that will be submerged in water if the Iraqi government completes the project of building the Makhoul dam. —AFP photos

A dam threatens to swallow farmland in drought-hit Iraq

Tens of thousands of Iraqis threatened by Makhoul dam

AL-MESSAHAG: Jamil Al-Juburi, 53, has never left his village in northern Iraq, where his family has worked the land for generations—but a dam will soon swallow his home, forcing them out. Tens of thousands of Iraqis are threatened by the Makhoul dam, which the government hopes will be operational on the mighty Tigris in five years. “I was born here and I grew up here,” said Juburi, whose village of Al-Messahag is set in pasture land on the banks of the river.

“It’s difficult to leave for somewhere else. It is a whole past that we leave behind us.” Once the dam is erected, Juburi’s whole region will be under three billion cubic metres (105 billion cubic feet) of water. In a country highly vulnerable to climate change—and buf-

and citrus trees. He would agree to move, he said, to put “the national interest above personal interest”—on condition that the dam “will serve Iraq” as a whole. Juburi also demanded “adequate damages” in order to safeguard his and his family’s future.

‘Severe threat’

Iraq already has eight dams, but it complains that construction of the facilities upstream, mainly in neighboring Turkey, has impacted its river volumes. Plans for the Makhoul facility can be traced back to 2001, in the twilight of dictator Saddam Hussein’s rule. His downfall in a US-led invasion and chaotic subsequent occupation saw the project shelved for years.

water reserves for Iraq,” he said. Five villages are located on the site of the future reservoir, he added, and “a commission has been formed by the provinces and relevant ministries to ensure adequate damages for residents” and to relocate them. But civil society is up in arms, not only about the human impact.

There are also repercussions for flora and fauna, warn environmental groups Save the Tigris and Humat Dijlah, who say the ancient city of Ashur—a UNESCO world heritage site—is also at risk. In August, the International Organization for Migration noted that “there has been no official attempt to speak or engage” with local communities. “Respondents who are farmworkers and landowners saw Makhoul Dam as a severe threat to their livelihoods,” IOM said in a report, sharing the findings of a study by Iraqi organisation Liwan for Culture and Development.

Lack of trust

“Nobody has come to see us. Nobody has asked us anything,” said Jamil’s father, Ibrahim al-Juburi, who is in his 80s. “My ancestors, my father, then I, all stayed in this region,” the farmer said, his body hunched. Liwan researcher Mehiyar Kathem said the real problem was the “reduction of water that is coming in” from upstream beyond Iraq’s borders.

“Iraq doesn’t need a new dam,” he added. Instead, “the Tigris needs to keep flowing” because of the increase in salinity. Kathem also pointed to the impact on vulnerable women-led households. “There is a higher number of women in the area who rely on the agriculture and on the land. We don’t know what is going to happen to female-headed households.” The study found that 39 villages—each home to between 200 and 8,000 residents—risk being submerged.

According to Liwan, 67 square kilometers of “fertile farmland, estates and orchards” will also disappear if the Makhoul dam reaches full capacity, and more than 61,000 livestock will have to be “sold or relocated”. “The dam can disrupt the everyday life of some 118,412 individuals,” said Liwan, noting an “absence of trust with decision-makers” among the local communities. Residents “commonly stated that any expression of discontent with Makhoul dam would fall on deaf ears, and their voices would be ignored”, it added. —AFP



SALAHEDDINE: Construction vehicles operate on the site of Makhoul dam project on the Tigris river, near the village of Messahag in northern Iraq's Salaheddine province.

feted by three consecutive years of drought—authorities have defended the project, which will boost water stores and help prevent shortages.

However, activists decry the impact on more than 30 villages—home to about 118,000 people—and the threats to biodiversity and archaeological sites. Employed at a state-run oil refinery, Juburi leaves his sons to work the family land, where they plant wheat

Work finally got underway in 2021, with drilling, soil analysis and a bridge spanning the river.

Riad al-Samarai, deputy governor of Salaheddin province, lists a 250 MW hydroelectric power plant and an “irrigation canal that will serve agricultural areas and contribute to the nation’s food security” as among the project’s benefits. “The public interest requires the construction of this dam to guarantee

Latin America rocked by extreme poverty

SANTIAGO: Extreme poverty is likely to affect 82 million people in Latin America in 2022, an increase spurred by a slow pandemic recovery and high inflation, the UN economic commission for the region said. “It has not been possible to reverse the impacts of the pandemic in terms of poverty and extreme poverty,” said Jose Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The figure represents 13.1 percent of the region’s population, an increase from 12.9 percent in 2021. Overall, 12 million more people are facing extreme poverty since 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Salazar-Xirinachs pointed to a “cascade of external shocks,” namely a slowdown in economic growth, the weak recovery of the jobs market, and rising inflation. The Santiago-based UN body said the extreme poverty figures were a “setback of a quarter of a century” for the region.

In October, the agency predicted higher-than-

expected growth of 3.2 percent in the region. However, this is expected to halve in 2023 with a projected growth of 1.2 percent. The UN body also highlighted the severe consequences the pandemic had on education in Latin America and the

Caribbean, with an average of 70 weeks of school closures compared to 41 weeks elsewhere in the world. The number of youths aged 18-24 who are not studying or working rose from 22.3 percent in 2019 to 28.7 percent in 2020. —AFP



SANTIAGO: Truck drivers partially block the route 5 north, at the entrance to Santiago during a protest against the increase in fuel price. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: A picture of Mahsa Zhina Amini is seen in a traffic light pole while Californian Kurds hold a demonstration and candlelight vigil to honor the memory of her in front of the Federal Building in Los Angeles, California. Amini died after being arrested in Tehran by the Islamic Republic’s morality police on September 16th. —AFP

Bank manager fired for serving unveiled woman

TEHRAN: An Iranian bank manager who served an unveiled woman has been fired, local media reported on Sunday, as demonstrations triggered by the mandatory head covering rule shake the Islamic republic. Women in the country of more than 80 million people are required to cover their heads, necks and hair, a law enforced by the country’s morality police.

The September 16 death in morality police custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, for allegedly breaching the dress code rules, sparked nationwide demonstrations which authorities call “riots”. Mehr news agency reported that the bank manager in Qom province, near the capital Tehran, “had provided bank services on Thursday to an unveiled woman”.

As a result he was “removed from his position by order of the governor,” Mehr quoted deputy governor Ahmad Hajizadeh as saying. Mehr said video of the unveiled woman “elicited a lot of reaction on social media”. In Iran most banks are state-controlled and Hajizadeh said it is the responsibility of managers in such institutions to implement the hijab law. Dozens of people, mainly protesters but also members of the security forces, have been killed during the demonstrations, which Iran says are encouraged by its Western “enemies”.

The hijab became mandatory four years after the 1979 revolution that overthrew the US-backed monarchy and established the Islamic Republic. Later, with changing clothing norms, it became commonplace to see women in tight jeans and loose, colorful headscarves. But in July this year ultra-conservative President Ebrahim Raisi called for mobilization of “all state institutions to enforce the head-scarf law”. Many women continued to bend the rules, however. —AFP

Business

Nurses to join other striking UK staff in two December walkouts

First strikes in union's 106-year history

LONDON: Nurses across most of Britain will hold the first strikes in their union's 106-year history next month, joining a host of other workers taking industrial action over pay. Staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland-but not Scotland-will walk out on December 15 and 20, after the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) union said the government had turned down an offer of negotiations.

It will be the latest industrial action in Britain, where decades-high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis have prompted staff in various sectors to demand pay rises to keep up with spiraling prices. RCN England director Patricia Marquis on Friday apologized to patients who would have operations or treatments cancelled. But she said the strikes were about "nurses standing up for themselves but also critically for patients".

The nurses' strike will be sandwiched between the first of a series of two-day walkouts by national railway workers, while postal service employees will stage fresh stoppages in the run-up to Christmas. Numerous other public and private sector staff, from lawyers to airport ground personnel, have also held strikes this year. The Office for National Statistics said "well over half a million working days" were lost to strikes in August and September-the highest two-month total for more than a decade.

With more strikes expected, there are predictions that days lost to stoppages could reach levels not seen since the 1970s and 1980s. Ambulance staff in Scotland are due to walk out on Monday. Other health unions representing midwives, physiotherapists and junior doctors have or are planning to ballot their members. "Nursing staff have had enough of being taken for granted, enough of low pay and unsafe staffing levels, enough of not being able to give our patients the care they deserve," said RCN head Pat Cullen.

The union, which wants a pay rise significantly above inflation, announced earlier this month that a ballot of its more than 300,000 members had found a majority in favor of strikes. Cullen said the union would set out details of which services would be exempt from strike action soon. "What we will continue to provide is life-preserving services," she told BBC radio adding that some cancer services would be exempt.

'Challenging times'

UK inflation has surged to reach a 41-year high of 11.1 percent in October on soaring energy and food bills. NHS bosses said in September that nurses were skipping meals to feed and clothe their children and



LONDON: Shoppers sit with their purchases in Selfridges and Zara-branded shopping bags in central London. — AFP

were struggling to afford rising transport costs. One in four hospitals had set up foodbanks to support staff, according to NHS Providers, which represents hospital groups in England. The government says it has accepted independent pay recommendations, and given over one million NHS workers a pay rise of at least £1,400 (\$1,590) this year.

That follows on from a three percent increase last year when public sector pay was frozen. But the RCN says this leaves experienced nurses worse off by 20 percent in real terms due to successive below-inflation awards since 2010. In Scotland, the union paused announcing strike action after the devolved government in Edinburgh reopened pay talks. The Scottish government said late Thursday it had made a "best and final offer" to unions of an average 7.5-percent increase, backdated to April if accepted.

UK health minister Steve Barclay said he was "hugely grateful for the hard work and dedication" of

nurses and regretted the strikes. The NHS had "tried and tested plans" to minimize disruption and ensure emergency services continue, he added. "These are challenging times for everyone and the economic circumstances mean the RCN's demands, which on current figures are a 19.2 percent pay rise, costing £10 billion a year, are not affordable," he said.

Barclay said he was prepared to discuss better working conditions for nurses with the RCN-but not pay. The union has questioned the UK government's economic rationale, noting it spends billions of pounds on agency staff to plug workforce gaps. It points to independent research it commissioned indicating that the finance ministry would recoup 81 percent of the initial outlay of a significant pay rise through higher tax receipts and savings on future recruitment and retention costs. In the last year, 25,000 nursing staff left the Nursing and Midwifery Council register, it said. — AFP

Macron to raise US subsidies in talks with Biden

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron will raise concerns about the effects of American industrial subsidies and tax breaks during talks with US President Joe Biden in Washington next week, a top French official said. France and other EU countries are increasingly alarmed that the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which Biden signed in August, will distort transatlantic trade to give American companies an unfair advantage.

The act, designed to accelerate the US transition to a low-carbon economy, contains around \$370 billion in subsidies for green energy as well as tax cuts for US-made electric cars and batteries. "We cannot risk more de-industrialisation in Europe at a time when we're trying to re-industrialise," a senior aide to Macron told reporters ahead of the French leader's trip to Washington from Tuesday night.

The biggest concern is about "American investment in Europe being repatriated," he said during a briefing ahead of what will be the first state visit by a foreign leader to Washington under Biden. Although Macron appreciates no major changes can be made to a law seen as one of Biden's main legislative achievements, he is hoping to carve out "exemptions" to help European industries. "We can imagine that the American administration agrees to exemptions for a certain number of European industrial sectors, perhaps in the same way as they're doing for Canada and Mexico," the aide added. Macron, 44, has long favored a Buy Europe Act that would offer incentives and requirements for consumers and governments to buy EU-made equipment. But the idea faces resistance from countries such as the Netherlands and Germany, which worry about the costs and the impact on trade. "The message from the Americans is 'Do your own IRA,'" the French aide said. Macron "will draw the necessary conclusions for us as Europeans from the conversations", he added.—AFP

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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 24 NOVEMBER 2022

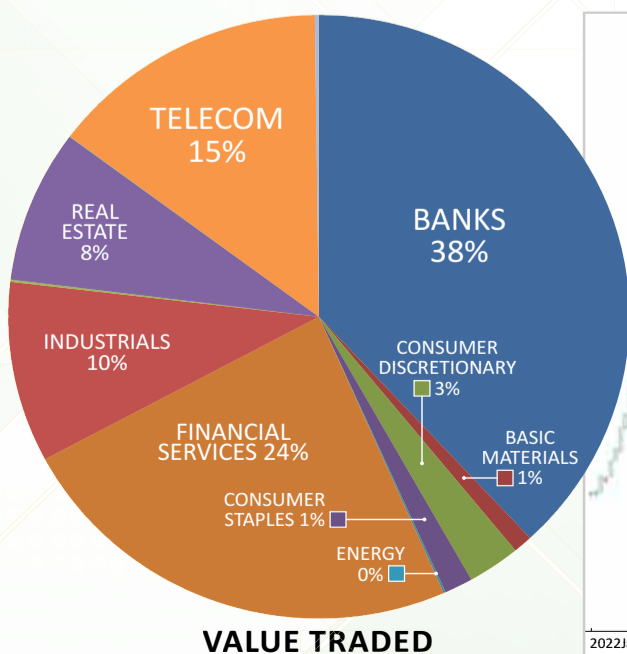
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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	39,374	8,486.24	-0.4%	3.6%	11.1%	349,833,380	140,804,400	24,684	26.0	2.6	79.5%
Main Market	10,160	5,704.58	0.2%	3.9%	-3.1%	442,959,774	47,723,167	19,088	42.8	1.4	20.5%
All Share	49,533	7,586.59	-0.3%	3.7%	7.7%	792,793,154	188,527,567	43,772	29.5	2.4	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
BANKS	31,258	1,865.67	0.3%	4.1%	15.0%	139,246,667	71,835,813	9,852	27.2	2.6	63.10%
BASIC MATERIALS	780	884.64	0.8%	3.3%	-13.7%	2,334,292	1,872,626	631	8.2	1.2	1.58%
CONSUMER DISCRETIONARY	989	1,483.51	0.5%	6.2%	11.0%	33,448,935	5,161,172	2,666	29.4	11.5	2.00%
CONSUMER STAPLES	145	476.29	3.4%	4.7%	-34.9%	7,301,341	2,786,571	665	0.0	1.1	0.29%
ENERGY	228	1,102.03	0.4%	8.0%	-22.8%	5,432,372	195,261	270	9.6	1.1	0.46%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	4,627	1,342.46	-2.8%	5.2%	-5.7%	383,958,068	44,775,403	13,959	68.8	1.8	9.34%
HEALTH CARE	222	454.28	0.0%	-5.7%	-43.0%	15,000	6,136,000	7	14.2	5.9	0.45%
INDUSTRIALS	3,955	1,119.93	-0.5%	1.3%	-1.9%	38,772,949	18,255,921	5,224	39.2	1.5	7.99%
INSURANCE	638	1,556.11	0.3%	2.0%	1.5%	3,564,870	216,316	440	9.5	1.0	1.29%
REAL ESTATE	2,721	1,275.84	-0.4%	3.8%	-3.8%	130,303,463	15,472,128	5,212	19.2	1.3	5.49%
TECHNOLOGY	9	676.57	8.3%	11.0%	-1.1%	478,036	43,408	132	0.0	0.8	0.02%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	3,746	1,224.41	-2.7%	1.0%	12.4%	45,938,006	27,515,197	4,524	13.7	2.0	7.56%
UTILITIES	215	513.16	-0.5%	1.0%	-14.5%	1,999,155	391,614	190	16.0	1.8	0.43%

Top Gainers						Top Losers					
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
UNICAP	62	10.71%	3,473,524	203,801.803	114	WETHAQ	27.4	-14.91%	3,132,968	90,446	306
SENERGY	45.9	9.29%	2,111,500	94,564.868	96	KPROJ	124	-14.48%	78,692,006	10,216,335	2,201
TAHSSILAT	22	8.74%	89,745	1,967.554	23	GFC	86	-8.02%	56,296	4,676	27
ASC	93	8.27%	478,036	43,408.233	132	SALBOOKH	15.1	-7.93%	621,641	9,439	85
SANAM	64	7.56%	11,600	734.700	6	FCEM	33.8	-5.85%	1,128,167	41,052	52

Top Volume						Top Value					
Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades	Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
GFH	84	1.09%	91,648,050	7,657,847	2,411	KFH	864	0.23%	36,828,728	31,712,473	3,170
KPROJ	124	-14.48%	78,692,006	10,216,335	2,201	ZAIN	593	-3.89%	43,987,954	26,164,669	3,411
ZAIN	593	-3.89%	43,987,954	26,164,669	3,411	NBK	1,120	0.27%	13,890,745	15,504,515	2,122
AAYAN	138	-3.50%	43,486,086	6,043,269	728	AGLTY	775	-1.52%	14,313,432	11,087,910	2,452
KFH	864	0.23%	36,828,728	31,712,473	3,170	KPROJ	124	-14.48%	78,692,006	10,216,335	2,201



Market Summary:

- Premier Market's weekly volume and value dropped 26% and 33%, and Main Market dropped 55% and 54%, respectively.
- Premier Index retreated to previous support to gain momentum to assist overcome a critical resistance level, while Main Index is showing further strength.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 7586, with support levels at 7556, 7503, and 7461, and resistance at 7677. The Premier index closed at 8486, with support levels at 8427, 8335, and 8273, while resistance at 8527. The Main index closed at 5704, with support levels at 5696, 5675, 5641, and 5601, while resistance was at 5723.

Business

China pledges \$100 million to Cuba, discusses new debt terms

Putin, Cuba leader showcase unity against US

HAVANA: China has donated \$100 million to Cuba to help it survive a crippling economic crisis exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, the island nation's Deputy Prime Minister Alejandro Gil said Saturday. The donation came as Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel concluded a visit to China, part of a rare foreign trip. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Diaz-Canel met on Friday and "the offer arose of a donation of around \$100 million by China," Gil told Cuban state television. Gil, who is also Cuba's economy minister, said the money would go toward "priorities" on the island, which has been rocked by its worst economic crisis in three decades. Diaz-Canel concluded his visit to China later Friday and continued on a global tour designed to gain support for Cuba in renovating an electrical system that has failed repeatedly, causing frequent blackouts. Gil said leaders of the two countries also discussed "the subject of the debt" that Cuba has accrued with China but did not specify the size of the debt.

"Our president explained the situation that we confront, and there was understanding from China. We are seeking mutually acceptable formulas for the planning and restructuring of the debts," Gil said. China is Cuba's second biggest trade partner after Venezuela. Both nations are strong political allies of Cuba. Earlier on his trip, Diaz-Canel visited Algeria, where President Abdelmadjid Tebboune promised to ship fuel to Cuba, donate a photovoltaic power plant and cancel interest on debts, Gil said. Diaz-Canel's trip was also to include stops in Turkey and Russia.

Unity against US

Meanwhile, Russian leader Vladimir Putin and Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel have presented a united front against their common "enemy" Washington as they slammed Western sanctions. The two also unveiled a bronze monument to Fidel Castro in the capital Moscow, with Putin praising the Cuban revolutionary as a "bright" man. The Kremlin chief, who has been seeking to pivot Russia from the West after he sent troops to Ukraine in February, praised Moscow's decades-old friendship with Cuba and said the two countries needed to ramp up cooperation further.

"We have always opposed various kinds of restrictions, embargoes, blockades, and so on," Putin told the Cuban leader at the Kremlin, welcoming that Havana backed Moscow on the international arena in return. Diaz-Canel said for his part that the visit to Moscow had a "profound" meaning. "First of all it is taking place as both countries - Russia and Cuba - are subject to unfair and arbitrary sanctions that continue, and they have a common enemy, the Yankee empire that manipulates a large part of the world," he said in the Kremlin.

Diaz-Canel backed Russia in its confrontation with the West, saying Moscow should stand firm. Russia's influence in Cuba waned with the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 but it has been making a comeback. Cuba has been under US sanctions for more than six decades, while Russia



JIBACOA: Coffee farmer Jesus Chaviano verifies the quality of coffee grains at his coffee plantation in Jibacoa, Villa Clara province, Cuba. Cuba launched an official strategy to value the depressed coffee sector by cultivating particular varieties of high quality and excellent grain yield, which would allow it to enter a select market for this product. —AFP

has been slapped with unprecedented Western sanctions after Putin launched an offensive on Ukraine on February 24. Diaz-Canel hopes the

visit to Russia will help boost his country's struggling energy sector in the midst of prolonged blackouts and fuel shortages. —AFP

Dutch court backs squatters in Russia tycoon's mansion

AMSTERDAM: The elegant house overlooking Amsterdam's iconic Vondelpark would fit in nicely with its neighboring dwellings, were it not for the huge anti-war banners draped down the outside. Since last month a group of squatters have occupied the luxurious five-storey building belonging to Arkady Volozh, the sanctioned co-founder of Russian search engine giant Yandex.

A court has now authorized the squatters to stay, after they argued that the house was currently empty and that he planned to rent or sell it in breach of EU sanctions, instead of living there himself. "Without the sanctions, the squatters would certainly have lost," one of their lawyers, Heleen over de Linden, told AFP. "So, this is a very special case, yes." The squatters have made their message very clear to the rest of the world with three banners. The first referred to the close relationship between Yandex and FSB, Russia's security service. Two others read "Against war", followed by "and capitalism".

AFP was denied access to the property Thursday by a young woman who opened the door to a visitor who had given a password, which referred to a statement published Wednesday on the website "Anarchist Federation". "WE HAVE WON", the squatters said in capital letters in the statement, hailing a victory "for the whole movement of squatters and for all those who like to watch the (Russian) billionaires have their property confiscated".

'Enjoy the beautiful city'

On a piece of paper hung near the entrance shortly after their arrival, the squatters introduce themselves as a group of young people affected by a shortage of housing in the Netherlands and invite neighbors for a drink. The note explains why they occupied the house belonging to 58-year-old Volozh, who resigned from the board of the Netherlands-registered Yandex in June to avoid the firm also being hit by sanctions.

Yandex is registered in the Netherlands and has European, UK and US subsidiaries, but the bulk of its business is in Russia and other Russian-speaking countries. The EU said Volozh was "supporting, materially or financially" the Russian government in its war on Ukraine. The squatters said that as Volozh is under sanctions, including an asset freeze and an EU travel ban, the house would have remained empty.

Squatting has been a crime under Dutch law since 2010, but "respect for one's home is a human right... that can stand in the way of eviction", explained Juanita van Lunen, who also defended the squatters. And in the event of an eviction request, when an unjustified vacancy threatens, the interests of the residents are decisive, she told AFP. But lawyers for Paraseven, a company registered in the British Virgin Islands which officially owns the premises, took the squatters to court in late October, demanding they be evicted from premises they were illegally occupying.

The lawyers said the house on Vossiusstraat, a street close to Amsterdam's top museums, was to be available to be lived in by Volozh or his family, including his wife, his six children and two grandchildren. The EU sanctions allow people under sanctions to use their property for personal use-even if Volozh himself is subject to an asset freeze and travel ban. "Occasionally they will stay there to enjoy the beautiful city of Amsterdam," the lawyer said in court. —AFP

Faroe Islands renew fishing quota deal with Russia

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's autonomous Faroe Islands have renewed a fishing quota deal with Russia for one year despite Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, a local minister said on Saturday. "The Faroe Islands are totally right to extend their existing fishing agreement with Russia," the North Atlantic archipelago's minister of fisheries Arni Skaale told the Jyllands-Posten daily. He added however that the islands, which are not part of the European Union, condemned "all form of war - also the war in Ukraine" after Russian forces invaded in February.

The agreement has been in place since 1977 and is renewable each year. It lays out catch quotas for cod, haddock, whiting and herring in the Barents Sea north of Russia for Faroese fishermen, and in waters off the coast of the Faroe Islands for Russian fishing boats. The autonomous territory is highly dependent on fishing for its income, and the fisheries ministry says the deal with Russia covers 5 percent of its GDP.

Russia has become a key commercial partner of the Faroe Islands since they and neighboring Iceland fell out with the European Union - including Denmark - between 2010 and 2014 over mackerel and herring quotas. An EU embargo on Faroese fish harmed the economy of the territory, which then turned to other markets. "Today we only have free

Venezuela's breakthrough spurs US to ease embargo

MEXICO CITY: The government of Nicolas Maduro and the Venezuelan opposition broke a political stalemate Saturday with a broad social accord, and the US government responded by allowing a major US oil company to resume operations in Venezuela. The accord heralded a potential easing of a grinding economic and political crisis in Venezuela.

It paves the way for the United Nations to oversee a trust fund of frozen assets of the Maduro government to be used for a variety of social projects in the South American country, including programs related to education, health, food security, flood response and electricity. "We have identified a set of resources belonging to the Venezuelan state, frozen in the global financial system, to which it is possible to access," said Dag Nylander, an envoy from Norway, which facilitated the negotiations. The amount to be released was not specified.

The agreement, signed in Mexico, ended 15 months of stalemate between the two sides, potentially easing a massive flow of refugees from Venezuela throughout the region and even impacting world oil markets. Maduro praised the deal on Twitter, saying it "opens the way for a new chapter for Venezuela, to keep advancing towards the peace and well-being that all Venezuelans yearn for."

And UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said in a statement that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was committed to supporting the parties, calling the breakthrough "an important milestone that has the potential to deliver broader benefits for the people of Venezuela." The US Treasury Department said the accord marks "important steps in the right direction to restore democracy" in Venezuela, and responded by issuing a license to Chevron Corp. to resume limited oil extraction operations in Venezuela.

World's largest oil reserves

The license will remain in effect for six months while the Biden administration assesses whether the Maduro government meets commitments made in the accord. Treasury said. Chevron said it would "continue supporting social investment programs aimed at providing humanitarian relief" in the country and that the "decision brings added transparency to the Venezuelan oil sector." The relaxation of curbs on Chevron's operations in Venezuela, which has the world's largest oil reserves, would allow the nation to move toward re-entering global



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) listens to Yandex CEO Arkady Volozh while standing by a prototype of a self-driving car by Yandex at the company's headquarters in Moscow in this file photo. —AFP

trade agreements with six countries - and not with the European Union," said Skaale. "If we cut ourselves off from one of these markets, it could be problematic for the whole of the next generation."

Authorities on the archipelago have however said they would think about alternatives to the deal with

Russia after local parliamentary polls on December 8. Last month, neighboring Norway - a NATO member - and Russia also agreed on catch quotas in the Barents Sea for next year. Home to some 54,000 inhabitants, the Faroe Islands have been largely autonomous from Denmark since 1948. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo, Los Angeles City Hall stands on the horizon as gasoline fuel prices are displayed at a Chevron gas station. The US eased oil-related sanctions against Venezuela on November 26, 2022, as President Nicolas Maduro's government and the opposition announced a humanitarian agreement on education, health and other social issues. —AFP

oil markets. International efforts to resolve the Venezuelan crisis have gained strength since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the pressure it has placed on global energy supplies. A joint statement by Canada, the United States, Britain and the EU pledged "willingness to review sanctions" on Venezuela but demanded that it release political prisoners, respect press freedom and guarantee independence of the judiciary and electoral bodies. The powerful Democratic chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Menendez, said the Biden administration should move slowly.

'Criminal dictatorship'

"If Maduro again tries to use these negotiations to buy time to further consolidate his criminal dictatorship, the United States... must snap back the full force of our sanctions that brought his regime to the negotiating table in the first place," Menendez said in a statement. Despite its huge oil reserves, Venezuela suffers grinding poverty and a political crisis that has led a UN-estimated seven million Venezuelans to flee the country in

recent years. Food, medicine and such basics as soap and toilet paper are often in short supply.

Saturday's accord made no headway on a critical issue: How to move ahead toward presidential elections scheduled for 2024. Venezuela's political crisis has worsened since Maduro declared himself victor of contested 2018 elections, which were widely seen as fraudulent, and generated widespread street protests. Maduro's opposition is seeking free and fair presidential elections while Caracas wants the international community to recognize Maduro as the rightful president and to lift sanctions, particularly a US oil embargo and freeze on the nation's overseas assets.

After the contested 2018 elections, almost 60 countries, including the United States, recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as acting president. The Unitary Platform opposition group has not reached consensus over the conditions it requires to take part in the vote, a source close to the negotiations told AFP. Guaido's influence has waned in recent years, and he has lost key allies both at home and in the region, where many countries have since elected leftist presidents. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

'FORGOTTEN' AFGHAN STORIES HIGHLIGHTED IN TWO NEW FILMS FROM NETFLIX, NAT GEO

The world's focus has shifted to the war in Ukraine, but two major new documentaries aim to throw the spotlight back on Afghanistan, and the people left behind by the United States' rapid withdrawal last year. National Geographic's "Retrograde" follows an Afghan general who tried in vain to hold back the Taliban advance in 2021, while Netflix's "In Her Hands" tells the story of the country's youngest woman mayor, who had to flee as the Islamists took over. "We've forgotten about this story-when was the last time we discussed the war in Afghanistan, or read an article about it?" said "Retrograde" director Matthew Heineman.

"Obviously there's still some coverage of it, but... not that many people are talking about this country that we left behind."

Both movies begin in the months before the US withdrawal, as their subjects tried to build a safer and more egalitarian future for their country. The two films end with their central characters forced to watch from abroad as the Taliban rapidly erases all their work. "Retrograde" began as a documentary with rare inside access to US special forces.

In one early scene, US troops are shown having to destroy-or retrograde-their equipment and wastefully fire off excess ammunition that was sorely needed by their Afghan allies. After the



US director Matthew Heineman

Americans left their base in Helmand, Afghan general Sami Sadat agreed to let Heineman's cameras stay and follow him, as he took charge of the ultimately doomed effort to stave off Taliban advances. In one scene, Sadat-stubbornly determined to rally his men to fight on as the situation crumbles around them-chides his aide for bringing to his war office persistent reports of nearby Afghan troops downing their weapons.

"Every neon sign was saying 'stop, give up, this is over,' and he had this blind faith that maybe, just maybe, if he held on to Lashkar Gah or Helmand, that they could beat back the Taliban," recalled Heineman. Sadat eventually had to flee, and the filmmakers shifted their lens again, to desperate scenes at Kabul airport as Afghans fought for spaces on the last American planes out. "It was one of the most difficult things

I've ever witnessed in my career," added Heineman, who was nominated for an Oscar for 2015's "Cartel Land." "Discussions around wars in public policy and foreign policy, they're often talked about and discussed without the human element," said the director. "One of the things I've tried to do throughout my career is take these large, amorphous subjects and put a human face to them."

'Murder'

Former mayor Ghafari had survived assassination attempts and seen her father gunned down by the Taliban before she too left Afghanistan as the Islamists moved in. "Talking about that moment, I'm still not able to stop crying... it was something that I really never wanted to do," said Ghafari, who drew the Taliban's ire by campaigning for girls' education after being appointed mayor of Maidan Shahr aged 24. "I had some personal responsibilities, especially after the murder of my dad... to help secure my family." The directors of "In Her Hands," which counts Hillary Clinton among its executive producers, returned to Afghanistan and filmed Ghafari's former driver Massoum, now unemployed and living under the Taliban.

In unsettling scenes, he is seen bonding with the same fighters who once attacked the car in which he was driving Ghafari. "The story of Massoum represents the story of all Afghanistan's cri-



In this file photo (from left) Director Marcel Mettelsiefen, former Mayor of Maidan Shahr, Afghanistan, Zarifa Ghafari and filmmaker Tamana Ayazi pose for AFP during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Canada. — AFP photos

sis... why people are feeling betrayed," said Ghafari.

'Share their pain'

Though the conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine are vastly different in nature, both films offer a cautionary tale about what can happen once the West's focus shifts. "Obviously, that's happened throughout history, and will continue to

happen long into the future. And so what can we learn from this experience?" said Heineman. Ghafari said: "Whatever happens in Ukraine and happened in Ukraine, it's the same thing that we have been going through for like 60 years. "The same thing, again and again. So we share their pain." — AFP

Open your soul: Ukraine refugee stories on stage in Warsaw

As a refugee herself, Anna Lysenko finds it cathartic to be playing the character of a Ukrainian woman forced to flee her homeland in a new production in Warsaw. "You open your soul. Those emotions, the pain that is in you, you let it out on to the surface," Lysenko, 21, told AFP as she finished her make up before the play. Lysenko had to escape with her child, leaving behind her husband who is serving in the armed forces and forcing her and look for a job in theatre in a new city. "Little by little, I came out of my cocoon, out of my depression," she said. The play "Six Ribs of Anger"-a reference to different levels of trauma-tells the stories of five Ukrainian women living in a refugee centre in Poland.

The plot documents their grief, fear and anger as well as their fantasies and how they help each other through the trauma. It is based on extensive interviews carried out by the directors in a sprawling refugee centre near Warsaw soon after Russian troops began their invasion. The play is being staged at the Komuna Theatre-a short walk from the central train station which saw millions of people transit through at the start of the war.

Lysenko plays the character of Lesia, a ballerina from Bucha-a town near Kyiv that has become synonymous with the alleged atrocities carried out by Russia. In one scene, she imagines herself in a tutu with a sword interrogating the Russian soldier who killed her mother. There is also a scene in which another character re-lives her last moments with her missing husband and daughter in Mariupol, a city that was devastated while being taken over by Russian troops.

"The aim of this play is to give strength to Ukrainians, show what they have endured and how strong they are, and how they can persevere," said the director Benjamin Koc. The director remembered entering the refugee centre for the first time. "I got shivers. It was a huge space under black sky, a black ceiling," he said, remembering the smell "like in a train when you travel for a long time". "It was quite shocking. Children were playing, roller skating all over the centre so life was continuing there but this life was unbelievably unreal".

The play has only ever been staged in Warsaw so far but Koc hopes he will be able to take it on tour, also to raise awareness about the war and its victims. Koc said it was "important" for the actors to take part in the production "because they are themselves in this situation" but it was not always an easy process. "It's impossible to work with them like with people who have a place to live, have comfort. You have to keep it in mind". The production is deeply moving but there are lighter moments too-such as jokes about Polish cuisine and a scene in which the characters perform dressed up as Eurovision winners Kalush Orchestra. — AFP



People hold placards bearing portraits of Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi (right), who is arrested in Iran, and portraits of children (left), who were killed during the protests in Iran, during a rally in support of Iranian women in Istanbul.-AFP

Christmas brings bad tidings for endangered Guatemalan fir

As Christmas approaches, Guatemalan authorities step up controls against poachers targeting an endangered fir tree that is a much sought-after festive decoration. The Guatemalan fir, known locally as the pinabete, is listed as "endangered" on the Red



Detail of a pinabete tree with Christmas decorations at Helvetia farm in Tecpan.

List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), due to its decreasing numbers. It is also listed by the CITES endangered species convention, currently meeting in Panama City, as an Appendix I protected species, meaning it

cannot be traded internationally.

But the real threat is at home, where the tree's distinct aroma is inextricably linked with Christmas. Each year in the lead-up to December 25, illegal loggers invade Guatemala's forests, many protected, to collect branches of the pinabete (Abies guatemalensis) to sell on the street and at markets. "We have always had a pinabete at home for its aroma; it is the hallmark of Christmas," Jaime Reyna, a resident of the capital Guatemala City, told AFP.

The Guatemalan fir, which can grow up to 50 meters (164 feet) high and one



Detail of a National Institute of Forests authorization mark on a pinabete tree at Helvetia farm.

meter wide, is found in humid forests in the western highlands some 2,400 to 3,500 meters above sea level, according to the CONAP conservation agency. Once spread over more than a million hectares, pinabete forests today cover no more than

27,500 hectares in nine of Guatemala's 22 departments.

Custom and culture

"The custom and the culture is to have a pinabete at home" for Christmas, Elmer Alvarez, regional director of the INAB forestry institute, told AFP. "When people cut them down illegally, the seeds are lost, which increases the risk of extinction," he explained. Because most pinabete trade is illegal, there are no reliable figures on logging. While the CITES meeting in Panama will seek to raise the protection level afforded to a variety of trees, the Guatemalan fir is not among them. So, authorities are seeking to stamp out the trade domestically.

In the pre-Christmas period, agents of CONAP and the police's nature protection division DIPRONA set up roadblocks to catch fir poachers, checking trucks, vans, and even buses. Offenders risk sentences of up to eight years in prison, in addition to fines, said DIPRONA representative Gympi Marroquin. The tree does not come cheap. It costs between \$20 and \$55 on average, and sometimes as much as \$200 in a country where the minimum wage is about \$400 per month, and 60 percent of the population lives in poverty. Yet, not even the high price serves as a deterrent.

"We cannot change it for a plastic tree, which in the end works out costing just as much," said fir enthusiast Reyna. Guatemala first sounded the alarm in 1979

tal crimes in the Islamic republic. Salehi had disappeared at the end of October before appearing in a video published on November 2 by Iran's state-run media. The video claimed to show the first images of Salehi after his arrest. It depicted a tattooed man in a sleeveless black T-shirt sitting on the ground, wearing a blindfold and looking bloodied and bruised.

The man says: "I am Toomaj Salehi. I said I made a mistake. I said... that you should run. I didn't mean you." Activists condemned the recording as a forced confession extracted under duress. Salehi is one of a number of prominent figures to be arrested in a mass crackdown that has seen dozens of journalists, lawyers, civil society and cultural figures arrested.

His detention came shortly after he gave an interview highly critical of the regime to the Canadian Broadcasting Cooperation. "You are dealing with a mafia that is ready to kill the entire nation... in order to keep its power, money and weapons," Salehi said in the interview. Iranian state media claim Salehi was arrested while trying to cross one of the country's western borders, but his family have denied this saying he was in the southwestern province of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari at the time. — AFP



An employee measures a pinabete tree at Helvetia farm in Tecpan.

about the future of the tree, which also grows in parts of Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. The country has since authorized private nurseries to cultivate pinabetes for legal sale, certified by the INAB, to try and save the remaining trees. — AFP



A worker mows the lawn in a forest of pinabete trees at Helvetia farm in Tecpan, Guatemala.



View of a pinabete trees at Helvetia farm in Tecpan, Guatemala. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



Taiwanese actress Sylvia Chang and Actor Anthony Wong of Hong Kong pose for pictures after winning the Best Leading Actress award with the film "A Light Never Goes Out" and the Best Leading Actor award with film "The Sunny Side of the Street" at the 59th Golden Horse Film Awards in Taipei. — AFP photos



Malaysian director Lau Kok-rui poses for pictures after winning the Best Original Screenplay and the Best New Director awards.



Taiwanese cinematographer Lai Cheng-ying poses with the trophy after winning the Lifetime Achievement Award.

HK ACTOR ANTHONY WONG WINS AT TAIWAN'S GOLDEN HORSE FILM AWARDS

Veteran Hong Kong actor Anthony Wong took top honors at Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards while a Chinese short film won for the first time since Beijing shunned the event due to political tensions. Dubbed the Chinese-language Oscars, the Golden Horse awards took place for the fourth straight year without most of the Chinese and Hong Kong A-listers who used to walk the red carpet in Taipei. Beijing officially boycotted the event in 2019 after a Taiwanese director advocated for the island's independence in an acceptance speech the year before.



Japanese actress Hitomi Kuroki poses as she arrives at the 59th Golden Horse Film Awards.



Taiwanese director Lana Mebow poses for pictures after winning the Best Director award with her film "Gaga".



Taiwanese actress Pagaw Piling poses with her trophy after winning the Best Supporting Actress.



Taiwanese actor Berant Zhu poses with the trophy after winning the Best Supporting Actor.



Taiwanese actor Hu Jhih-ciang jumps to celebrate after winning the Best New Performer.

China claims self-ruled democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and has long blacklisted its entertainers over any perceived support for independence. Wong was reportedly declared persona non grata by Chinese authorities for backing Hong Kong's 2014 pro-democracy Umbrella Movement and a supporter of the city's independence, which he denied.

He won the award for best actor-his first prize on his third nomination-for playing a Hong Kong taxi driver helping a Pakistani refugee boy in "The Sunny Side of the Street". "I think new directors bring me luck and I should only

work with new directors for my future films," Wong joked at the ceremony as the crowd erupted into laughter.

He was referring to Malaysia's Lau Kok-rui, who won the awards for best new director and best original screenplay. "The Sunny Side of the Street" was among seven Hong Kong films in the running this year in a strong showing for the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Five Chinese independent films were also contending, although there was still no submission of a feature-length film or major commercial release. Chinese director Huang Shuli's documentary short film "Will

you Look at Me" was the only work from the mainland that bagged a prize. "There are so many fears in the world... but I believe love can conquer fear," Huang said in a rare appearance by a Chinese filmmaker at the ceremony. "I hope everyone can keep making (films), and face the world and face yourself honestly".

There were only two nominations from China in both 2020 and 2021 in the best documentary and animated short film categories, but no winners. Huang's film, about a conversation with his mother on acceptance of his homosexuality, was a Queer Palm best short

film winner at the Cannes Film Festival. "Coo-Coo 043", depicting Taiwan's pigeon racing, took best picture and Indigenous Taiwanese Laha Mebow won best director for her family drama "Gaga". Veteran Taiwanese director-actor Sylvia Chang was crowned best actress for her role in Hong Kong social drama "A Light Never Goes Out". Hong Kong crime thriller "Limbo" led the pack with 14 nominations but walked away with only four technical awards.—AFP

Freud centenary exhibit reunites artist with closest friends

British artists Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon were friends for decades before a bitter falling out. Now a new exhibition explores the pair's friendship with two other influential painters with whom they shared models, rivalries and a belief in portraiture in 1950s and 60s London. Freud's first wife Caroline Blackwood famously said of Bacon that he came over for dinner "nearly every night for more or less the whole of my marriage to Lucian". "We also had lunch," she added. But while their friendship is well documented, the lesser known relationship the pair had with two other artists—Frank Auerbach and Michael Andrews—was equally important, said exhibition curator Richard Calvocoressi.

The four friends and rivals sat for and painted one another and hung out together in central London's Soho district. Freud and Auerbach also shared a common history, having both fled Nazi Germany as children. "Friends and Relations", which opens on Thursday at central London's Gagosian gallery and runs until January 28, was inspired by a famous black and white photograph taken of the four artists in 1963 by John Deakin.

'Radical artists'

The men are pictured along with the much younger painter Timothy Behrens in



A gallery assistant poses next to "The Colony Room I" by Michael Andrews displayed at the "Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews" exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in London. — AFP photos

a Soho restaurant. "I thought it would be interesting to look at him (Freud) in the context of these close friends," Calvocoressi told AFP. The four painters "were seeing a lot of each other in the 1950s and 1960s. They, very unfashionably at the time, held out for figurative art... at a time when abstract art was all the fashion. "I think they found the conventions of representational painting tired and in need of rejuvenating and refreshing and that's what they did, and over the course of half a century—they stuck to the human figure as the core subject in their art," he said.

A highlight of the exhibition is the group portrait "The Colony Room I" by Andrews

depicting Freud, Bacon and artist's model Henrietta Moraes among others at the storied drinking club that was a favorite haunt. Calvocoressi said that Soho and the British capital, where each made their home, was another theme running through the exhibition, with works such as the rubbish-strewn view from Freud's studio and a painting of Primrose Hill by Auerbach.

The exhibition features more than 40 paintings gathered from private and public collections, including many of the artists' portraits of one another.

Calvocoressi said the quartet "sparked off each other" and were "the most radical" of their generation of artists.



Curator Richard Calvocoressi poses in front of a picture by John Deakin of painters (from left to right) Timothy Behrens, Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach and Michael Andrews at Wheelers Restaurant in London in 1963 displayed at the "Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews" exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in London.

'Sensitive works'

"They talked endlessly about art... they formed a sort of distinct group" at a time when people were turning to other artistic movements such as pop, conceptual and minimalist art, he said. "I think after the last war... and the revelations of all that happened in Nazi occupied Europe and the death camps, a lot of painters lost faith in humanity and painting. "How do you paint a human being again after he or she has committed something like that?"

But the four London painters "stuck to their interest in the human form", he said. "Relations" featured in the exhibition include spouses, lovers, models, children

and parents. "Naked Portrait on a Red Sofa" meanwhile shows Freud's fashion designer daughter Bella. The work painted in 1989/91 when Bella was in her late twenties was described by his friend, the photographer Bruce Bernard, as one of his "most audacious and sensitive works". Of the four artists, only Auerbach, now 91, is still alive. Bacon died in 1992, Andrews in 1995 and Freud in 2011. Auerbach is still painting and during the pandemic, deprived of sitters, turned to self portraits. — AFP



A gallery assistant poses next to "Reflection (self-portrait)" by Lucian Freud displayed at the "Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews" exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in London.



A gallery assistant poses next to "Self Portrait" by Frank Auerbach displayed at the "Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews" exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in London.



A gallery assistant poses next to "Head of a Man" by Francis Bacon displayed at the "Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews" exhibition at Gagosian Gallery in London.

Sports

Lakers overpower Spurs again as Suns edge Jazz

LeBron James scores a season-high 39 points

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James scored a season-high 39 points to lead six Los Angeles players in double figures Saturday as the Lakers beat the San Antonio Spurs for the second time in two days on Saturday, 143-138. James, who scored 21 points but showed some rust in his return from a groin injury in Friday's win in San Antonio, effortlessly picked up the slack with star teammate Anthony Davis sidelined with a calf injury on the second night of the NBA back-to-back. James, who pulled down 11 rebounds, was a perfect 10-for-10 from the free-throw line and drained seven of the Lakers' 17 three-pointers.

James, who was struggling from three-point range before injury sidelined him for five games, said he never doubted the shots would start to fall. He was just as pleased with the overall team effort. The chemistry was on display late in the second quarter when James came up with a steal and lobbed a pass to Russell Westbrook in the corner only for Westbrook to toss up the ball for the onrushing James to slam home.

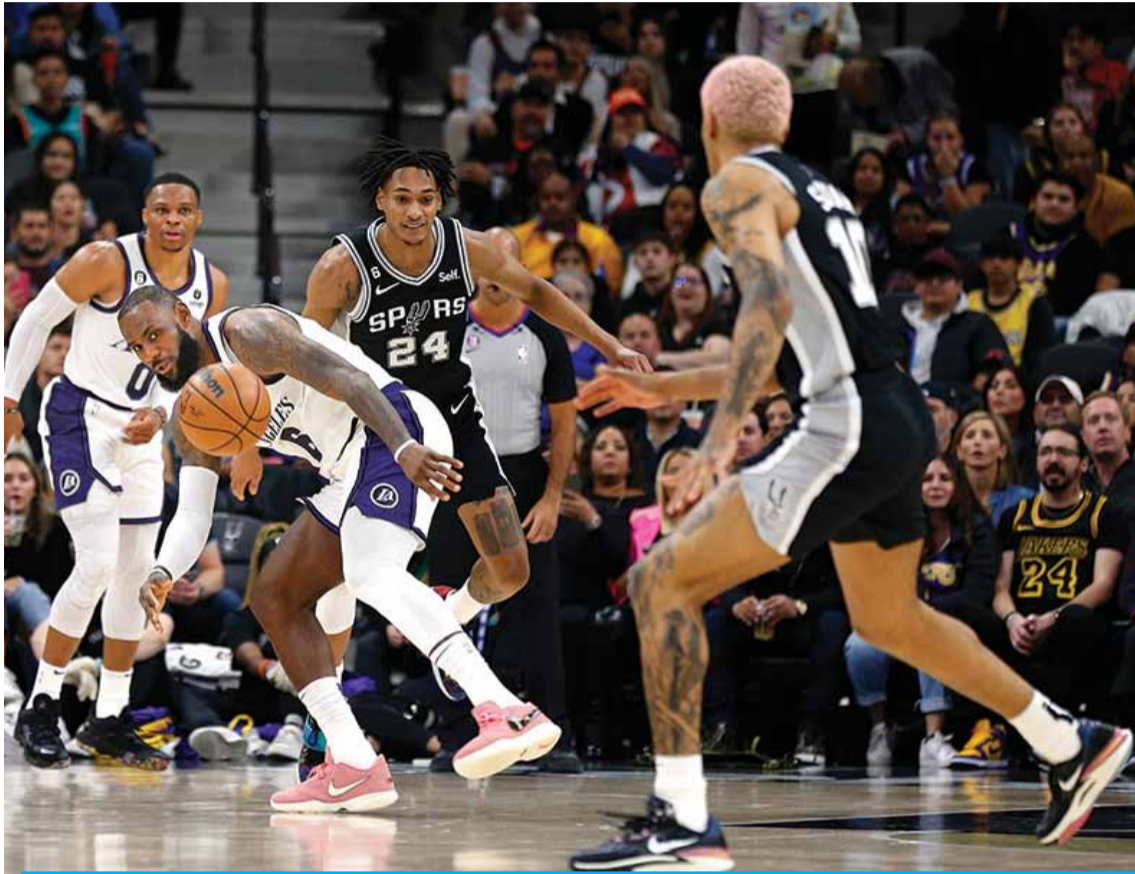
"I feel like we're getting better and better," James said of a Lakers team that has struggled in the early going this season. "Early in the season we'd have lost a game like this," he said. "I feel like we're definitely buying in to the extra pass. Guys are trusting their shots and not thinking about it - (we're) shooting from the perimeter with confidence and we're also still attacking the rim." Dennis Schroder added 21 points and Lonnie Walker added 19. Westbrook added 11 points with seven rebounds and six assists in what proved a bruising encounter.

Westbrook was incensed when he took an elbow to the face from Zach Collins under the basket with two minutes left in the third quarter. Westbrook jumped up, bleeding profusely, and charged toward Collins before James got his arms around Westbrook and, as they head-

ed toward the bench, a held a towel to his forehead. Collins was ejected for a flagrant foul and Westbrook - who went briefly to the locker room but returned to the game after it was determined he didn't need stitches - was assessed a technical foul. At 7-11, the Lakers are third from bottom in the Western Conference.

Suns hold off Jazz

West leaders Phoenix improved to 13-6 with a 113-112 home victory over the Utah Jazz. Deandre Ayton led the Suns with 29 points and 29 rebounds. Devin Booker connected on just eight of 27 shots on the way to 26 points for the Suns, who were without star point guard Chris Paul for a ninth straight game as he continues to battle a right heel injury. Utah held a three-point lead going into the fourth quarter, but Phoenix forged a 99-93 lead with 6:23 to play and would not trail again. The Jazz got within one point half a dozen times from there, but could get no closer. In Toronto, the short-handed Raptors shook off a sluggish start to beat NBA scoring leader Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks 105-100. OG Anunoby scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter as the Raptors emerged with the win in a battle that came down to the wire. Anunoby also put in a solid defensive effort on Doncic, who scored 24 points and nine assists but matched his season low with just 15 shot attempts. "He's an amazing player," Doncic said of Anunoby. "I would say on both ends. I think He is the steals leader in the NBA, but offensively he got so much better. I'm impressed with his game he's an amazing player." Fred VanVleet, back after missing one game because of illness, also scored 26 points for the Raptors, who were without Pascal Siakam, Scottie Barnes, Precious Achiuwa and Otto Porter Jr.— AFP



SAN ANTONIO: LeBron James #6 of the Los Angeles Lakers tries to steal the ball against the San Antonio Spurs in the first half at AT&T Center on November 26, 2022.- AFP

Boonma wins 2nd Asian Tour title in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Thailand's Danthai Boonma won his second Asian Tour title when he triumphed at the US\$400,000 Bangabandhu Cup Golf Bangladesh Open in Dhaka on Sunday. Boonma carded a three-under-par 68 in the final round at Kurmitola Golf Club to finish 13 under par on 271, one shot fewer than his playing partner and compatriot Kosuke Hamamoto. Hamamoto, the overnight leader, was searching for his

maiden Asian Tour title but slipped back when he could only manage a 70 on the final day.

Third-placed Rattanon Wannasrichan, two shots further back, ensured a clean sweep of the top three positions for Thailand. Local favorite and two-time Asian Tour winner Siddikur Rahman closed with a 70 to finish in a group of four players tied for fourth. "I'm so excited about my second win on the Asian Tour," said an ecstatic Danthai, whose maiden Asian Tour win came at the World Classic Championship at Laguna National in Singapore in 2015.

Danthai, who bagged prize money of \$72,000, started the day one shot behind Hamamoto but a run of three consecutive birdies going into the turn gave him a lead he never relinquished. "Yeah, nothing to say but I can't believe it, because it's been tough in the

past two years, I didn't really play very good you know," he said. Hamamoto, the SEA Games individual gold medal winner in 2017, was satisfied regardless of the results.

"I definitely felt the nerves out there, but I am very happy with how my game is trending. I just need to stay patient and do the same thing and I think my time is coming soon. I am really proud of how I handled myself." Defending champion Sadom Kaewkanjana from Thailand finished joint 42nd. The tournament has been part of the Asian tour since 2015 but was not held in the past two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Asian Tour heads to its season-ending event next week, the US\$1.5 million BNI Indonesian Masters at Royale Jakarta Golf Club, from December 1-4.— AFP

Kuwait's Al-Duaij wins gold medal

KUWAIT: Kuwait Triathlon team had outstanding results during their participation in the World Championship that was concluded recently in Abu Dhabi. Abdelaziz Al-Duaij won the gold medal in the 20-24-year Category. Najlaa Al-Juraiwi won the silver medal of the 30-34 Category, while Huda Al-Saleh was able to win the 20-24 bronze medal. Abdelaziz Al-Duaij also won the Charity Race that was held on the sidelines of the championship. Kuwait delegation was headed by the Triathlon Club and Federation President Rashid Al-Kandari and included 14 players and 4 officials. Al-Kandari congratulated the athletes.

Kuwait's gymnastics team win 10 medals

KUWAIT: The Kuwait rhythmic gymnastics team won ten different medals in the Baku and UAE Youth World Championships, which are being held simultaneously in Azerbaijan and the UAE. Kuwait Gymnastics Federation said in a statement Sunday that the Kuwaiti national team won six medals in the Baku Championship, which was held in Azerbaijan, with the participation of roughly 500 players, including Sarah Al-Bannai and Raya Al-Qassar.

Al-Bannai won four medals including three gold in the freestyle and two other competitions, in addition to a silver in the hoop competition, whereas her teammate Al-Qassar won two bronze in the freestyle and another competition, it added. The gymnasts won four medals in the UAE Championship, which is being held in Dubai with the participation of 300 players, through Amina Al-Kandari and Talia Behbehani, as the first one snatched three medals, with gold for a competition, silver for another and bronze for ball performance competition, while the second player won a silver medal, it mentioned.

The federation commended the achievements of the champions, explaining that the competition in the two tournaments, especially the Baku one, was very strong considering the participation of advanced European countries, and the UAE championship witnessed the participation of several Arab teams. — KUNA



Kuwait Riding Club's Al-Kharafi shines

KUWAIT: Kuwait Riding Club's Ali Jasem Al-Kharafi won the third round of the second edition of Kuwait Equestrian Federation League following a strong competition with other riders during the championship that was held on Friday and Saturday at the Hunting and Equestrian Club tracks in Sabhan. Al-Kharafi was able to jump over the 140 cm high hurdles without a fault. The main run had strong competition between five riders. Al-Kharafi was able to complete the round in 37.74 seconds - beating Abdelrahman Al-Fuzaie, Nick Channing and Abdallah Al-Awadhi. In the 130 cm, Abdallah Al-Awadhi won the first place - beating Fawaz Al-Subaie and Antonio Morozo. Kuwait's international referee Nabila Al-Ali handed the winners their prizes.

England cricketers in Pakistan for first Test series in 17 years

ISLAMABAD: England's cricket team arrived in Pakistan early Sunday to play three Tests for the first time in the country since 2005. England played a successful Twenty20 series two months ago in Pakistan but have declined to play a Test match there for 17 years because of the precarious security situation. They were due to visit Pakistan last year but pulled out after New Zealand abandoned their tour minutes before the first one-day international, citing security alerts. There were fears of a similar pull out earlier this month following an attack on former prime minister Imran Khan during a protest march in Wazirabad, a city in Punjab province. But England's Test skipper Ben Stokes quashed all fears following a positive security advice.

"It's been a long time since England have played Test cricket in Pakistan," Stokes said in Abu Dhabi on Friday. "With what happened with Imran Khan recently, there was a little bit of concern, but we have Reg Dickason, who has been the security man for many years with England, and we left it in his capable hands." "In terms of the tour itself, I'm really looking forward to it," Stokes added. "I've never been there, and I'm quite interested to see what the security lark is like. I've heard it's pretty intense." The squad and support staff were whisked to the team hotel under heavy security which Pakistan has been putting in place since the revival of international cricket in the country since 2015. Pakistan were forced to play their home matches on the neutral venues of the United Arab Emirates following attacks on the Sri Lankan team in 2009. But Pakistan have hosted multiple teams in the last seven years, the most notable being Australia earlier this year.

The three-match series-part of the World Test championship-starts in Rawalpindi from December 1 with the second Test in Multan (December 9-13) and the third in Karachi (December 17-21). Pakistan, currently fifth in the nine team championship to England's seventh, will hope for a series win in order to finish in the top two to play the 2023 final. Pakistan, led by star batter Babar Azam, will be without key fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi who is nursing a knee injury and experienced leg-spinner Yasir Shah, not selected due to poor form.

England fast bowler Mark Wood is in doubt for the first Test with a hip injury while experienced James Anderson, the only survivor of the 2005 tour but did not figure in the 2-0 series defeat, will lead the attack. - England squad: Ben Stokes (capt), James Anderson, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ben Foakes, Will Jacks, Keaton Jennings, Jack Leach, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Mark Wood, Rehan Ahmed.— AFP



Malinin 'in shock' at quad-axel powered Espoo gold

ESPOO: American teenager Ilia Malinin said he was "still in shock" after conjuring up his fiendishly difficult quadruple axel to take gold in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating in Espoo on Saturday. The reigning world junior champion's reward was a ticket to the Grand Prix Final in Turin next month where he will be joined by Japan's Mai Mihara who won women's gold. Malinin was lying second to Frenchman Kevin Aymoz, the surprise leader after the men's short program on Friday with Japan's Shun Sato in third. But wooing the crowd and judges with his gravity-defying free skate program he earned a score of 192.82 points for a 278.39 point winning total.



ESPOO: US' Ilia Malinin performs to win during the men's free program of the ISU figure skating Grand Prix in Espoo, Finland, on November 26, 2022. — AFP

"I'm still in shock at how I was able to perform," the teenage sensation said. "I was a little mad after yesterday's performance. I was really hoping that today I would forget about it and gain my confidence again, just to make sure that I am able to be in control of everything." The son of Russian-born Uzbekistani skater Tatiana Malinina, the 1999 Grand Prix Final and Four Continents champion, turned up in Finland after landing only the second quadruple axel ever per-

formed in competition last month to become Skate America's youngest-ever men's champion.

Malinin performed the first ever quad axel in a lower level event in September. Regarded as the most difficult jump in figure skating, double Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu attempted one unsuccessfully at the Beijing Olympics this year. Skating to the soundtrack of 'Euphoria' by Labyrinth on Saturday Malinin had a hand down on the ice on his unique jump before hitting his first competitive quad flip.

'Put it out there'

Whilst not the most fluent in places the technical complexity of his programme earned its deserved reward. "I definitely put it out there," said the new kid on the figure skating block who will attempt to become the youngest winner of the Grand Prix Final after Yevgeny Plushenko. Taking second on Saturday was Japan's Sato (262.21) with Aymoz (255.69) in third.

Aymoz was always up against it as his return from a number of injuries has delayed his attempt at quad jumps. Earlier Mihara, skating to Manuel De Falla's 'El Amor Brujo', shook off some hesitant jumps to produce an overall solid skate and take first place in the women's free program with 130.56 points. The 23-year-old from Kobe's total of 204.14 gave her a second success of the season after the MK John Wilson Trophy in England two weeks ago.

Like Malinin she set herself up among the favorites for the Grand Prix final in Turin next month. World silver medalist Hendricks led after Friday's short program but looked out of sorts skating to Karl Hugo's 'Heaven' and 'Fallen Angel'. A popped Axel and a tumble on a triple Lutz, put the 23-year-old Belgian third on the day and second overall with 203.91 points, just 0.23 behind Mihara. Hendricks, winner of the Grand Prix in France, joins Mihara in the elite season-ending Grand Prix Final in Turin from December 8-9.

Mana Kawabe finished third overall ahead of compatriot and former Grand Prix winner Rika Kihira who is making her way back from injury. In pairs, Italy's Rebecca Ghilardi and Filippo Ambrosini led all the way to take gold after their free skate to "The Barber of Seville" to finish ahead of Germany's Alisa Efimova and Ruben Blommaert. The Italians scored 189.74 points to the German's 170.75, to take the first ISU Grand Prix medal, and qualify for the Final in their home country. The sixth and final round of the Grand Prix series concluded with Canada's Piper Gilles and Paul Poirier winning ice dance gold.— AFP

Sports

World champions S Africa end 2022 on a high note

Springboks defeat England 27-13

TWICKENHAM: World champions South Africa ended 2022 on a high with a convincing 27-13 win over England at Twickenham on Saturday. The Springboks outscored England two tries to one, wing Kurt-Lee Arendse and veteran lock Eben Etzebeth both crossing, with fly-half Damian Willemse landing two drop-goals. South Africa held out despite playing the last 20 minutes a man down after Thomas du Toit was sent off for a high tackle on Luke Cowan-Dickie. It was a deserved win with the Springboks, just as they had done in overwhelming England 32-12 in the 2019 World Cup final, dominant at the scrum and more creative in attack.

England, who had come from 19 points down late on to snatch a stunning 25-25 with New Zealand last week, then cut South Africa's lead to 14 points nine minutes from time when replacement back Henry Slade went over for a converted try. But the Springboks held firm for their second victory in four Autumn Nations Series matches as they ended the calendar year with nine wins from 14 Tests ahead of their 2023 global title defense in France.

'Big relief'

"It is a big relief for us," South Africa captain Siya Kolisi told Amazon Prime as he paid tribute to a "tough" England. "It is not that much of a difference but we are just seeing opportunities which we didn't in the past." By contrast, the result meant England had won just one of their November matches to finish the year with just five victories from 12 Tests-their worst annual return since 2008. "We are disappointed we didn't play how we wanted to," said England coach Eddie Jones. "It

took until the game had gone to start playing how we wanted to."

'Didn't land a shot'

But the veteran Australian coach, also in charge of his native Wallabies' defeat by England in the 2003 World Cup final, insisted there was time for his current side to "rise to the occasion" in France. "We didn't land a shot like we wanted to today (Saturday)," he added. "You have to win contests. We didn't win the air or the set-piece so it's hard to get in the game." South Africa's victory was all the more impressive as they were missing several players for a Test taking place outside World Rugby's international window following their 63-21 thrashing of Italy last week. The Springboks had suffered defeats by Ireland and France during the Autumn campaign-with director of rugby Rassie Erasmus receiving a two-game matchday ban following his social media posts regarding refereeing decisions after those losses.

South Africa's Faf de Klerk was off target with an early penalty while, far more surprisingly, England captain Owen Farrell missed two of his first three efforts after succeeding with all 15 of his previous goal-kicks this month. South Africa's territorial dominance was rewarded when Willemse landed a 30-metre drop-goal just after the half-hour mark and barely 60 seconds later the Springboks had a try.

England fly-half Marcus Smith's clearing kick was safely gathered in his own 22 by Willemse, who evaded the cover before finding full-back Willie le Roux on his inside. Le Roux released Arendse, sprinting up on his outside, the wing speeding past Smith for a seventh try in seven Tests. De Klerk



LONDON: South Africa's flanker Franco Mostert catches the ball in the line out during the Autumn Nations Series International rugby union match between England and South Africa at Twickenham stadium on November 26, 2022. — AFP

missed the conversion but South Africa were 14-3 ahead at the interval when the scrum-half landed a penalty. Willemse caught England cold with a second drop-goal a minute into the second half, again from 30 meters.

Farrell landed a penalty only for a fresh infringement to see England's Tom Curry sin-binned minutes later. South Africa won possession from the

close-range line-out and lock Etzebeth was driven over for a try between the posts in the 49th minute that De Klerk converted to put the Springboks 24-6 ahead. The diminutive De Klerk punished England's indiscipline again with a superb penalty from just inside the half-way line. Du Toit then saw red and Slade scored a well-worked try converted by Farrell but it was all too late for England. —AFP



Fatat Club Futsal Team consolidated their lead

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Fatat Club Futsal Team consolidated their lead in the URC Futsal Women League by defeating Kuwait Club 4-1 in their match on Saturday. Fatat now have 9 points from three consecutive wins while Kuwait dropped to third place. In the second match, Tadhamon moved to second place after defeating Fatayat Al-Oyoun 7-1. Tadhamon now have 6 points while Fatyat Al-Oyoun remain pointless.



Serbia face probe over Kosovo flag

DOHA: FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against the Serbian football federation after the team hung a controversial flag depicting Kosovo in their changing room before their loss to Brazil at the World Cup. The Kosovo football federation (FFK) filed a complaint with the governing body after photos showed a version of the Serbian flag with a map including Kosovo as part of the country and stamped with the slogan "there will be no surrender".

Kosovo, a former Yugoslav province with an

Albanian majority, declared independence from Serbia in 2008, which Belgrade refuses to recognize. "The FIFA disciplinary committee has opened proceedings against the football association of Serbia due to a flag displayed in their dressing room on the occasion of the Brazil v Serbia FIFA World Cup match played on 24 November," FIFA said in a statement.

FIFA's disciplinary code prohibits "offensive behavior and violation of the principles of fair play" and "using a sports event for demonstrations of a non-sporting nature". Kosovo sports minister Hajrulla Ceku on Friday tweeted his anger at "disgraceful images from the Serbia locker room, displaying hateful, xenophobic and genocidal messages." Ceku added: "We expect concrete actions from FIFA considering that (Kosovo) is a full FIFA and UEFA member." —AFP

Auger-Aliassime fires Canada into Davis Cup final

MALAGA: Felix Auger-Aliassime pulled double duty on Saturday to lead Canada into the Davis Cup final against Australia after orchestrating a 2-1 comeback win over Italy. World number six Auger-Aliassime first defeated Lorenzo Musetti 6-3, 6-4 after Lorenzo Sonego had earlier beaten Denis Shapovalov 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 in the opening rubber of the semi-final.

The 22-year-old Canadian then replaced the out-of-form Shapovalov to partner Vasek Pospisil in the decisive doubles and the gamble paid off in a 7-6 (7/2), 7-5 win over Matteo Berrettini and Fabio Fognini. Berrettini, ranked 16 in singles but only 827 in doubles, replaced Simone Bolelli but the late switch by skipper Filippo Volandri backfired. On Sunday, Canada, runners-up to Spain in 2019, will attempt to win the Davis Cup for the first time. Australia haven't played in the final since 2003 when they claimed a 28th title.

In a doubles clash which lasted two hours, the Italians were made to regret surrendering early

breaks in both sets. The Canadian duo broke decisively for 6-5 in the second set before sealing their spot in the championship match leaving Italy still stuck on one Davis Cup title won back in 1976. "We knew we could make changes if we needed to," said Auger-Aliassime. "The whole team have connected around this idea - the main goal of lifting the cup on Sunday. There are no egos and it's a great feeling."

Canada captain Frank Dancevic said he opted for Auger-Aliassime in the doubles as he was the fresher player. "Vasek, he plays amazing with both Denis and Felix," he said. "Denis just played a really long match today. Felix was more fresh. He was feeling great on court. He was fresh going into the match. That was sort of the thought behind the decision. "Denis really left his heart out today. Played a 3 hour, 15 minute match. It was tough coming back to play doubles today when we had Felix who was fresh."

Italy skipper Filippo Volandri revealed that the late inclusion of Berrettini was sparked by injury to the veteran Bolelli. "Yesterday I asked Matteo to try to be ready for today in case we had to play the doubles. He decide to try to be there, and he practiced twice yesterday. He practiced alone this morning and he was ready," said Volandri. "I'm really proud of all members of the team, because when I ask them to try to do something, they always do. That's why I'm really proud of them." —AFP

Kilde starts downhill title defense with a win at Lake Louise

MONTREAL: Aleksander Aamodt Kilde started his World Cup downhill title defense in perfect style with an impressive victory in the opening speed event of the season at Lake Louise on Saturday. Kilde won both the downhill and super-G World Cup titles last season but had to settle just for a solitary bronze medal in super-G at the Beijing Olympics.

The 30-year-old claimed his first career win on the Canadian slope with a time of 1:47.98 just six hundredths seconds ahead of Austria's Daniel Hemetsberger. "It's absolutely enormous, I couldn't have had a better start to the season. Now I can just do the job, I know the momentum is there," said Kilde. Bad weather had forced the race to be moved from the planned Friday slot but conditions were decent and Kilde was fast out of the hut and no-one was able

to match his speed in the first sector.

Coming down sixth, he punched the air at the finish line when he saw his time and he said it had been a difficult piste to navigate. "Total cowboy, it hit more than I thought and it was difficult to know what was coming," he said. It was the best ever World Cup result for the 31-year-old Hemetsberger, who has been plagued by injuries but who took third at Kitzbuehel in January-his only other podium finish. Switzerland's Marco Odermatt, coming down 12th, was ahead of Kilde until the final split after a perfect middle section, but saw his 0.39 lead disappear in the final stages.

Odermatt had to settle for third, four hundredths behind Hemetsberger while Austrian Matthias Mayer, the three-time Olympic gold medalist, was fourth. All-rounder Odermatt had begun the campaign with victory in the giant slalom in Soelden and was content with his display. "I'm very happy with my race, the ten hundredths is tiny but Kilde deserved to win. The self-confidence was great after Soelden, it came out well," he said. Olympic downhill champion Beat Feuz of Switzerland was fifth and French 41-year-old Johan Clarye was sixth, 0.88 off the winning time. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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NOTICE
November 24, 2022




Mr. Vishwas Vikaraman, son of Mr. Vikaraman Sreedharan Pillai, resident of Kavinal Koikkal Njettor, Kulanada PO Pandalam, Pathanamthitta - 689503, Kerala and Ms. Sukana Subaja Karunan, daughter of Mr. Karunan Chemmeri, resident of Karuna, Ottachimakool, Pookode PO, Pattiam, Kannur - 670691, Kerala both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).


 (Kamal Singh Radhika)
 First Secretary (Community Affairs)
 and Marriage Officer,
 Embassy of India, Kuwait.
 Email: cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in

Messi's goal revives Argentina WCup hopes; Mexico lose 2-0

Another loss would spell the end of tournament chances

DOHA: Lionel Messi helped keep Argentina's World Cup bid alive with the first goal in a 2-0 victory over Mexico on Saturday. Defeat to outsiders Saudi Arabia in their opening Group C match in Qatar had left Argentina on the brink, knowing another loss would spell the end of their tournament chances. But the Albiceleste just edged a disjointed and tetchy affair against their fellow Latin Americans at the Lusail stadium in Doha. And who else but the mercurial Messi should be the hero, firing home a low shot from 20 yards on 64 minutes, before Enzo Fernandez added a thunderbolt second goal for Argentina three minutes from time.

"The first game cost us," said Messi. "We knew that we had to win today, that another World Cup was starting for us and we knew how to do it. "It was a tough game to pick ourselves up for because Mexico play well. "The played the first half with intensity but the second half we relaxed and became ourselves again." Messi's goal meant he tied the late Diego Maradona on eight goals and 21 appearances at the World Cup for Argentina.

It came a day after Argentines marked the second anniversary of Maradona's death. The goals were two rare moments of quality in an often poor and tense encounter where the occasion seemed to get to everyone, except seven-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi. But Argentina still need to win their final group match against Poland to guarantee a place in the knock-out stages. "We cannot let up now. Every game is a final now, we cannot make any mistakes," said Messi.

Fractionous, forgettable

The first half was an entirely forgettable affair. Mexico's back five and aggressive approach left Argentina with little space or time to construct anything. And the Mexicans never had enough players forward to cause their opponents problems when trying to counter. The two sets of fans deserved so much more as they created a feverish atmosphere in the Lusail Stadium that was close to capacity with more than 88,000 supporters. But even Messi could



LUSAIL: Argentina's forward #10 Lionel Messi (right) and Argentina's forward #15 Angel Correa fight for the ball during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group C football match between Argentina and Mexico on November 26, 2022. — AFP

make no inroads, struggling to get on the ball and even less so in areas where he could cause damage.

The best early chance saw big Mexico centre-back Cesar Montes stab wide a devilish dead ball delivery from Luis Chavez. Argentina came closest when Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa made a hash of trying to punch away a Messi free-kick that was curling dangerously toward goal. The referee's whistle saved Ochoa as he collapsed to the ground claiming he was fouled. That was another feature of

the first period-players rolling around on the turf clutching their faces after imagined contact.

Key substitutions

Alexis Vega produced Mexico's best effort with a fierce free-kick that Emiliano Martinez held well in the Argentina goal. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni wasted little time in the second half to change things up, bringing on three substitutes by the 63rd minute, including Manchester City youngster Julian Alvarez.

for the ineffectual Lautaro Martinez. Within a minute, Messi was criminally left unmarked just over 20 yards from goal to take a drilled pass from Angel Di Maria, which he cushioned with a sublime first touch to then pick out the bottom corner with a fierce low drive. Scaloni immediately switched to a back three, bringing on centre-back Cristian Romero for winger Di Maria. Mexico coach Gerardo Martino responded by throwing on forward Raul Jimenez for a defender and changed to a 4-3-3 formation. — AFP

Klinsmann's criticism anger Iran and coach

DOHA: Iran coach Carlos Queiroz called on Jurgen Klinsmann to resign from a FIFA experts' panel on Sunday after the former Germany striker accused the Iranians of gamesmanship in their World Cup win over Wales. Klinsmann, a member of FIFA's seven-member technical study group that is analysing the World Cup in Qatar, took aim at Iran's antics following their 2-0 Group B win against Wales on Friday.

The former USA coach said a series of niggling fouls and the conduct of the Iranian coaching staff during the game was part of a deliberate strategy to make opponents "lose their focus". "This is not by coincidence. This is all purposely. This is part of their culture, that's how they play it," Klinsmann said while working as a studio analyst for the BBC.

"They work the referee—you saw the bench always jumping off and working the linesman and

the fourth referee on the sideline. "Constantly in their ears, constantly in your face on the field... this is their culture. "They make you lose their focus, make you lose your concentration and what's really important to you." Klinsmann's remarks drew a furious response from Iran's football federation and Queiroz, who branded the German World Cup winner's remarks a "disgrace to football."

“Even not knowing me personally, you question my character with a typical prejudiced judgment of superiority,” Queiroz wrote in a series of posts on Twitter. “No matter how much I can respect what you did inside the pitch, those remarks about Iran culture, Iran national team and my players are a disgrace to football.” “Nobody can hurt our integrity if it is not at our level, of course,” the veteran former Portugal coach added.

Queiroz invited Klinsmann to visit the Iranian camp at the World Cup to “listen how much the love and respect football” despite the “outrageous” criticism. However he said Klinsmann would only be welcome if he stepped down from his FIFA role. “We just want to follow with full attention what will be the decision of FIFA regarding your position as a member of Qatar 2022 Technical Study Group,” he wrote. “Because, obviously, we expect you to resign.”



Jurgen Klinsmann

before you visit our camp."

Iran's federation meanwhile drew attention to Klinsmann's reputation for "famous dramatic dives" during his career, as well as Germany's involvement in the infamous 1982 World Cup clash with Austria known as the "Disgrace of Gijon", when both sides appeared to agree on a mutually beneficial result that eliminated Algeria. "Iran Football Federation already asked for FIFA immediate clarification on

'Odds stacked' against African teams at WCup

DOHA: Ghana coach Otto Addo said Sunday the chances of an African team reaching the latter stages of the World Cup will remain limited until the continent is awarded more places at the tournament. No African side has ever gone beyond the quarter-finals at a World Cup, although Ghana were a missed penalty away from reaching the last four at South Africa in 2010. Addo, speaking on the eve of his team's Group H match against South Korea, said Africa, with 54 teams, deserved more slots.

"There was never a point where everybody had an equal chance at the start. Never in FIFA history," Addo said in Doha. "It's very, very difficult if you have five slots to get far. If you have 12 or 14 slots-I

don't know how many Europe get-the probability that a team will get further is much, much higher." Thirteen of the 32 nations present in Qatar come from Europe. Asia has six representatives, with South America and the CONCACAF region sending four each.

Senegal are the only African side to have won a match at the Qatar World Cup. None of the five African teams who took part four years ago in Russia made it out the group stage. "Everybody still has chances, some more, some less, but I'm hoping and praying at least one or two (African) teams can advance to the next stage," said Addo, who played for Ghana when they made the last 16 on their World Cup debut in 2006. The Black Stars play South Korea in their second match on Monday after losing their opening game 3-2 to Portugal. Addo had criticized the performance of American referee Ismail Elfath, insisting the penalty Portugal were awarded for a challenge on Cristiano Ronaldo was a "gift". But he said he had had time to reflect on the defeat. — AFP



AL WAKRAH: England's forward #07 Jack Grealish (center) and England's forward #20 Phil Foden (4th right) and teammates take part in a training session at Al Wakrah SC Stadium in Al Wakrah, south of Doha. —AFP

Foden clamor puts Southgate under pressure at WCup

AL-RAYYAN: Gareth Southgate's refusal to use Phil Foden during England's draw 0-0 draw against the United States has put renewed pressure on the Three Lions boss ahead of their decisive World Cup Group B clash against Wales. With England laboring to prise open the well-drilled US defense at the Al Bayt Stadium on Friday, it was notable that Southgate turned to Jack Grealish and Marcus Rashford as his attacking changes.

For the second successive World Cup game, Manchester City playmaker Foden had started on the bench. After a 19-minute cameo in the 6-2 win over Iran, he was left kicking his heels as an unused

substitute as England fell flat against the US. Foden has been frozen out by Southgate's preference for starting Mason Mount behind striker Harry Kane, with Bukayo Saka on the right side of the attack and Raheem Sterling on the left.

While there were only muted complaints from fans and pundits about the 22-year-old's exile when England crushed Iran, the spotlight on Southgate's decision was far harsher following a lethargic display in the US stalemate. "For Phil Foden not to be playing is a real shame because he's a massive talent. He's our best player by a mile," former England defender Gary Neville said. Wayne Rooney, England's record goalscorer, agrees with Neville that Foden should be part of the starting line-up. "I found it very strange that Foden did not come on as a substitute against the USA. He would be a key part of my starting XI if I were the England boss," Rooney wrote in the *Times*. "Technically, he is the best footballer England have. I think if you have a talent like Foden, you simply have to play him." —AFP



DOHA: Ghana's coach Otto Addo (right) shares a joke with his assistants during a training session at Aspire training zone in Doha on November 27, 2022. —AFP

Morocco triumph, jeopardize Belgium's World Cup hopes

Sabiri and Aboukhlal's late goals secure a surprise 2-0 win



DOHA: Belgium's goalkeeper #01 Thibaut Courtois (right) concedes a goal shot by Morocco's midfielder #11 Abdelhamid Sabiri (unseen) during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F football match between Belgium and Morocco on November 27, 2022. — AFP

DOHA: Morocco jeopardized Belgium's World Cup hopes as Abdelhamid Sabiri and Zakaria Aboukhlal's late goals secured a surprise 2-0 triumph in Doha on Sunday. Belgium, third in Russia four years ago, could have qualified for the last 16 with victory but instead produced another insipid display after their fortunate opening win over Canada. Substitute Sabiri was the hero thanks to a 73rd-minute free-kick which Thibaut Courtois allowed to bounce in at his near post, before Aboukhlal grabbed a second in stoppage time. The tens of thousands of Morocco supporters responded by cheering their team home at a raucous Al Thumama Stadium.

Morocco replace Belgium at the top of Group F and know they will qualify for the knockout phase for the first time since 1986 if they can avoid defeat against Canada on Thursday. Belgium, the world's second-ranked side, will have to beat 2018 runners-up Croatia to be sure of going through. Roberto Martinez's ageing side have reached at least the quarter-finals of each of the past four major tournaments. Belgium, whose captain Eden Hazard has admitted are not as good as in 2018, lacked spark and were made to pay by inspired opposition.



Morocco's midfielder #11 Abdelhamid Sabiri celebrates after he scored his team's first goal.

Morocco were dealt a blow after the national anthems when goalkeeper Yassine Bounou appeared to gesture he would not be able to play. The experienced Munir El Kajoui was sent out in his place. The Atlas Lions fans vastly outnumbered their Belgian counterparts and breathed a sigh of relief when the Europeans almost grabbed a fourth-minute lead. Hazard played in Michy Batshuayi whose effort from a tight angle was kept out by Munir. Belgium dominated the early exchanges but Morocco did manage a shot at goal when Hakim Ziyech fired over from distance.

Morocco gain confidence

The African side continued to grow into the contest and Selim Amallah, who was born in Belgium, volleyed into the stands before Achraf Hakimi blazed a presentable chance off target. The crowd erupted in raucous celebration when Ziyech's free-kick flew all the way into the net in first-half injury time. But the goal was ruled out after a VAR check, as Romain Saiss was leaning

just offside and the former Wolves defender was in 'keeper Courtois' eye-line. Both teams started the second period brightly, with Ziyech shooting straight at Courtois and Hazard bringing a save from Munir at his near post.

Sofiane Boufal almost broke the deadlock in the 57th minute after a jinking run but bent the ball narrowly wide of the far post. Martinez made two changes on the hour mark, replacing the ineffective Hazard with Dries Mertens and bringing on Youri Tielemans for Amadou Onana in midfield. Mertens almost made an immediate impact when his strike from just outside the area was beaten away by Munir. The deadlock was finally broken with 17 minutes remaining as Sabiri's free-kick from near the touchline, much like for Ziyech's ruled out goal, caught out a flat-footed Courtois.

Martinez threw on Romelu Lukaku, expected to miss the game injured, in a desperate attempt to get back into the match. But Belgium had long since run out of ideas and it was Morocco who scored the second goal of the game. Brilliant play by Ziyech created space in the area for Aboukhlal to lash the Chelsea winger's pull-back into the roof of the net. Any tension in the stands was lifted and the Morocco fans were able to celebrate their first World Cup win in 24 years. — AFP

Costa Rica stun Japan

DOHA: Japan captain Maya Yoshida urged his team to stick together after their 1-0 loss to Costa Rica on Sunday and believes a place in the knock-out round is still within their reach. Yoshida said the Blue Samurai struggled to come down from the high of beating Germany in their opening game and found it "difficult" to prepare for Costa Rica, who were coming off a 7-0 thrashing by Spain.

Japan will likely now need at least a point in their final group game against Spain to progress and Yoshida urged his team-mates to pull off another famous win. "We didn't have the same mentality as against Germany today, probably - that was our big mistake," Yoshida said, after losing to a Costa Rica side that scored in the 81st minute with their first shot on

target. "It's too easy to say we give up. Our strength is solidarity and unity. Again, we need to stick together and try to get the three points in the next game."

Japan looked a shadow of the vibrant side that roared back to stun Germany as they toiled against a defense-minded Costa Rica. A win would have seen the Blue Samurai take a giant step towards the last 16 and Yoshida admitted they found the situation difficult to deal with. "After the huge win against Germany and a big defeat for Costa Rica against Spain, it was a very difficult preparation, mentally," he said. "I've been asking myself all the time for these past three days, are you ready? I asked that to the squad as well."

Japan had the lion's share of possession but failed to carve out many clear-cut chances against a Costa Rica side playing with five defenders. Instead it was "Los Ticos" who scored with their only chance of the game, after a loose clearance by Yoshida allowed

goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois to punch the ball into the net. The goal was ruled out after a VAR check, as Romain Saiss was leaning

ally took a toll on Canada and they drew level in the 36th minute. Kramaric was picked out by Ivan Perisic's deft reverse pass into the Canada area and he took a touch before drilling a fine finish into the far corner from an acute angle. Croatia were hitting their stride and Hajduk Split forward Livaja, selected in place of Nikola Vlasic, repaid Dalic's faith in the 44th minute.

Josip Juranovic's run was halted just outside the Canada area, but Livaja pounced on the loose ball, nimbly shifting it out of his feet before sending a superb low strike past Milan Borjan. Canada substitute Jonathan Osorio was inches away from equalizing with a long-range blast that flashed just wide early in the second half. Chances kept coming at both ends and Borjan plunged to his right to keep out Kramaric's close-range shot before Jonathan David's strike was 20 yards was tipped over by Livakovic.

The predatory Kramaric delivered the knockout blow in the 70th minute. Perisic's cross reached Kramaric in the Canada area and he worked space for a left-foot finish that arrowed through Atiba Hutchinson's legs into the bottom corner. Majer's tap-in completed the rout from Mislav Orsic's pass in stoppage time. —AFP

Croatia send Canada out of World Cup

DOHA: Croatia got their World Cup campaign back on track as Andrej Kramaric's double inspired a 4-1 win that eliminated Canada in Sunday's Group F grudge match in Doha. Zlatko Dalic's side were stunned by Alphonso Davies's second-minute opener at the Khalifa International Stadium. But Hoffenheim forward Kramaric equalised and Marko Livaja put the 2018 World Cup runners-up ahead just before half-time.

Second-half goals from Kramaric and Lovro Majer ensured Croatia could celebrate their first win of the tournament after a goalless draw with Morocco in their first match. Croatia sit top of Group F, above Morocco on goal difference, and a draw in their final



Morocco's supporters react as they watch the live broadcast of the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F football match between Belgium and Morocco on November 27, 2022. — AFP photos



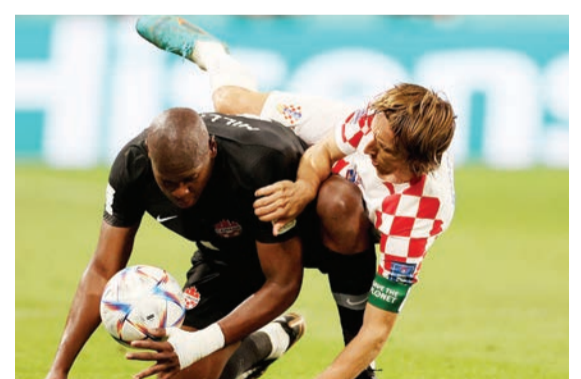
Morocco players celebrate Morocco's midfielder #11 Abdelhamid Sabiri scoring his team's first goal during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F football match between Belgium and Morocco.



Belgium's midfielder #06 Axel Witsel and Morocco's midfielder #15 Selim Amallah (front) jump to head the ball during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F football match between Belgium and Morocco.



Japan fans cheer during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group E football match between Japan and Costa Rica.



Canada's defender Kamal Miller and Croatia's midfielder Luka Modric fight for the ball during their Qatar 2022 World Cup match at the Khalifa International Stadium on Nov 27, 2022. — AFP



A fan of Canada (left) and another of Croatia pose on the stands ahead of the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F football match between Croatia and Canada Doha on November 27, 2022.